

Exploring the Impact of Stimulus Events on Intern Career Intentions and Well-Being

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### **Abstract**

Internships are crucial in many sport management students' path to the sport industry. The purpose of this sequential mixed-methods study was to understand the nature of stimulus events occurring within sport management internships, and the impact of stimulus events on two main outcomes: student career decision making and well-being. Pre-post internship surveys (n=23) and follow-up interviews (n=21) were used to identify stimulus events, if intern expectations were met, and if career intentions or well-being changed (i.e., increased or decreased). Stimulus events occurred related to many areas of the internship (e.g., tasks, supervisor, social interactions, inclusivity, and the environment) and had a range of impacts on the outcomes of study. Importantly, contributing to the Unfolding Model of Employee Turnover, participants outlined that these events influenced well-being not only as a result of the influence on career intentions, but also on its own. At other times, the impact on well-being was discussed in isolation or in the opposite direction of the impact on career intentions. The findings here have important theoretical and practical implications for both sport management educators and organizational internship supervisors in sport.

**Keywords: Internships, Mixed-Methods, Career Intentions, Well-Being**

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Engaging in internships and acquiring quality work-related internship experiences has become increasingly relevant for what employers look for in potential job candidates (Hering, 2010). Due to the value employers in varying industries place on practical experience, an internship is a major component of many post-secondary degrees that usually occurs in a program's upper years, and in turn, is seen as a necessity for career development and workplace transition (Chen & Chen, 2011; Coco, 2000; Cunningham, Sagas, Dixon, Kent, & Turner, 2005; Parveen & Mirza, 2012). McMahon and Quinn (1995) described internships as "supervised work experiences" which positions the internship as the middle ground between school and the workplace (p. 13). O'Neill (2010) reflected on the importance of internships as they give students the opportunity to apply school learning and build a professional network.

The demand for interns and internship experience is not confined to specific jobs or industries, rather it is widespread (Maertz Jr, Stoeberl, & Marks, 2013). Maertz et al. (2013) and Burke and Carton (2013) cited literature on internships in industries including, but not limited to: manufacturing, technology, engineering, mathematics, accounting, investment banking and consulting, marketing-advertising, hotel and restaurant management, public relations, and human resources. Further, research exists regarding internships related to health care programs (residency training) and health care positions (nurses and doctors, for example; e.g., Cheraghi, Salasli, & Ahmadi, 2008; Holdway, Corbeil, McPherson, Oremush, & Murray, 2005; Kotarba, 1990; Lin, Lin, Li, Huang, & Chen, 2013; Verdonk Röntzsch, de Vries, & Houkes, 2014). With increasing internships occurring in different industries, it is difficult to determine how many students intern

yearly. According to the College Employment Research Institute (as cited in Burke & Carton, 2013), of the ten million university or college students in the United States (US; strictly four-year programs) three quarters of them will, before graduating, intern once. In 2014, it was reported that an estimated 300,000 young Canadians were working unpaid internships alone (Burley & Awad, 2015). These statistics provide a general picture of how many students are filling internship-based positions within North America.

### **The Internship Experience**

Internship positions today tend to be much shorter in duration (Burke & Carton, 2013). Specifically, internship positions now typically range between two months and one year; many are the length of a school semester (Day, 2012; Smith, Smith, & Caddell, 2015; Surujlal & Serra, 2014). Further, many programs use the internship as an academic credit alternative for students, and specifically an opportunity for experiential learning within the program (such as the ones examined in this study; Burke & Carton, 2013). The shorter duration facilitates this “for credit” purpose as it fits well within a school year by typically only taking up one semester of a program. Therefore, the student is taken out of the classroom and placed in a situation where they have an opportunity to put learning into practice (O’Neill, 2010; Walo, 2001).

The opportunity to take classroom theory or learning and apply it in the industry is critical for student development. As noted, internships serve the purpose of skill development and workplace transition as the placement is intended to provide students with experience in a work setting (Chen & Chen, 2011; Coco, 2000; Cunningham et al., 2005). Additionally, the internship can help build confidence in the student going forward in their industry, therefore being a key aspect of career or personal development

(Abdullah, Zahari, Mat, Zain, & Derani, 2015; Smith et al., 2015). Not only are internships perceived to be beneficial, but also many university and college programs tend to push their students towards internship opportunities as a fundamental step to finish their degree and be marketable in the industry (Burnsted, 2010). Internships also give students a chance to build up their professional network which they may not have had a chance to do in the early stages of their education (Hope & Figiel, 2011).

The US Bureau for Labor Statistics estimates 70% of jobs are attained due to networking (as cited in Glenn & Mattei, 2014). A benefit of developing a professional network is that when positions open up, individuals hiring tend to look to those in their own network first (Glenn & Mattei, 2014). Sport management degree programs in particular place a high importance on networking associated with internships (Odio, Sagas, & Kerwin, 2014). Odio et al. (2014) highlighted the need to network in the field of sport management to make contacts. Specifically, students who network through internships get a foot in the door and gain access to highly sought-after employment postings. To emphasize the point, Kornspan and Duve (2013) presented numerous studies where industry professionals emphasize the importance of networking to sport management students. One issue that arises within internships today is the number of organizations that take advantage of student reliance on networking, and the programmatic focus on benefits associated with internships outlined previously. This unfortunate power imbalance (in favour of the sport organizations offering internships) involves a lack of pay, or inadequate pay, when it comes to internships on behalf of the organization. Further, the link to low or inadequate pay that seems to be present in the sport sector, favours students who are more financially secure (Caddell, Mcilwhan,

Irving, Smith & Smith, 2013). Thereby, the state of internships within the North American sport education context may discriminate against students who cannot afford to work for little to no pay (Caddell et al., 2013). Despite the many benefits associated with internships, as discussed, there are still issues with aspects of the internship that need to be covered. Some important issues that will be discussed next involve compensation of the student during the internship, stimulus events (referred to as shocks within the theoretical framework), or notable instances that occur during the internship to the student, and what the sport management literature that does exist, has revealed about internships in this industry.

**Compensation.** In terms of remuneration for the students' time and effort within an internship position, there seems to be relatively little consistency in terms of what organizations offer their interns. Due to many students interning as a part of their academic program, organizations may avoid having to pay the student altogether (Burke & Carton, 2013). Reasoning for this may involve organizations being able to be exempted from paying students for their work under Canadian provincial labour law exceptions; despite unpaid internships being illegal, there are a list of exceptions where the organization is not obligated to pay, one of which includes being for a school credit ("What is the law?", n.d.). Further, there continues to be a lack of clarity, or a grey area, in Canadian laws on where the line is, and where it should be drawn in relation to interns being eligible for payment (Southwick, 2014). Referring back to the statistic of 75% of ten million US students interning in four year programs, Burke and Carton (2013) noted that between one third and one half will receive no compensation. Some companies will pay honorariums upon completion of the internship to assist the interns in recovering

some costs (such as commuting) incurred while interning (Jermyn, 2012). Unfortunately, these honorariums are typically not sufficient to cover the cost of commuting in addition to recovering the cost of lost wages associated with an internship that tends to be the hourly equivalent of a full-time job (Day, 2012). Therefore, most students are not able to work other jobs to have a source of income and cover financial responsibilities such as rent, food, and other costs. Additionally, Burley and Awad (2015) reported that in the U.S., the average student debt in 2012 was \$20,326 USD, and the number of young adults with student debt had increased from 23 to 45 percent over the previous decade. For Canadian students, those that require Canada Student Loans graduate with an average debt of \$28,000 (Burley & Awad, 2015). Not only are students leaving school in debt, but many students are also forced to take unpaid positions in the hopes of finding future employment.

From a student perspective, inadequate compensation is a concern because unpaid internships are viewed as less organized and structured versus paid placement counterparts (Caddell et al., 2013). In particular, Caddell et al. (2013) noted that compensation associated with paid internships typically equates to greater investment from both the intern and the organization. Further, Caddell et al. (2013) stated that greater investment comes with higher demands and expectations put on the student, therefore resulting in more meaningful experiences for students. Adding to this, Coknaz (2014) wrote that interns are more satisfied and willing to work for the organization when treated as employees – rather than when treated like cheap labour or given simple, menial tasks.

Finally, Burke and Carton (2013) noted that paid internships result in more employment offers than unpaid internships. A survey from the National Association of

Colleges and Employers revealed that of the paid interns working in the for-profit sector, 60% received employment offers, while only 38% of unpaid interns received such offers (Burke & Carton, 2013). These studies together begin to reveal the potential importance of proper remuneration for interns as it not only provides income, but also seemingly transforms the nature of the internship itself due to higher demands and expectations of the student.

**Inaccurate Expectations.** There has been a recent shift toward uncovering the potential negative experiences and issues arising with internships (Chen & Chen, 2011; Koc, Yumusak, Ulukoy, Kilic, & Toptas, 2014; Lam & Ching, 2007). Specifically, inaccurate student expectations is an issue that is receiving more scholarly attention (Chen & Chen, 2011; Day, 2012; Todd, Magnusen, Andrew, & Lachowetz, 2014). Chen and Chen (2011) found that students had both positive and negative experiences with their internships in the Tourism industry, but an issue that arose was unrealistic expectations entering the placements; this occurred mostly around students not being aware of the internship's characteristics. Specifically, unrealistic expectations may cause students to react negatively because, for instance, they may not get what they hoped out of the internship (e.g., valuable work/industry experience). One example would be more menial tasks being asked of the students such as file editing or copying as well as answering phones, and being treated as low-cost labour, making them feel uncomfortable (Chen & Chen, 2011; Coknaz, 2014). Narayanan, Olk, and Fukami (2010) highlighted that internships serve to prepare students for the reality of the workplace, but note that students must be properly prepared for the internship in order to get the most out of the experience.



Related to the expectations discussion, Todd et al. (2014) explored “Realistic job previews” (RJP) in the sport industry where the researchers showed prospective job candidates a RJP which accurately displayed what to expect in an internship placement. They found many job seekers had unrealistic expectations of positions in the sport industry (Todd et al., 2014). Thus, when participants saw the accurate representation of what sport jobs entail via RJP’s, the result was (a) tempered expectations, (b) adjustments to student attraction to certain positions, and (c) lowered chances of students accepting positions based on the RJP (Todd et al., 2014). Further concern is that the unrealistic expectations can cause lower productivity for the individual, in turn affecting the organization (Todd et al., 2014).

Holyoak (2013) echoed the impact of expectations by stating that proper expectations of interns help ensure the experience is as positive as possible, where the student experience should be the focal point. Inaccurate expectations can have a big impact by affecting the students’ outlook on the sport industry, their goals, and their plans to move forward regarding a career.

### **Career Intentions**

A central purpose of the internship, and outcome, is the resulting varying impacts the internship experience can have on intern career intentions. As will be mentioned further via Hurst, Thye, and Wise (2014), the internship can serve as validation that the industry (or specific position such as event management) the individual is interning within is of interest moving forward in terms of pursuing a career. From a different perspective, Brooke and Carton (2013) note the use of an internship as providing a realistic view of the occupation interns intend to enter; if the industry or specific position

is found to be less desirable than anticipated, career trajectory can be adjusted. This can help address the previously mentioned issue of inaccurate expectations, or at least better prepare interns for a career post-internship. Regardless, the internship experience plays a fundamental role in the career planning process of interns, and can impact career decision making in different ways.

### **Well-Being**

Beyond affecting career intentions, another factor this study aimed to explore was students' well-being, and if well-being was affected by stimulus events impacting career intentions. More specifically, subjective well-being (SWB) is a concept that is made up of positive and negative affect (i.e., moods and emotions revolving around how individuals interpret events in their lives), and life satisfaction (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). Diener et al. (1999) reported that an individual's emotions and life satisfaction can be affected based on their personal goals, their progress in regard to achieving these goals, and their success in general in the achievement of these goals. Further, Diener et al. (1999) noted that individuals react positively when progress is made, and negatively when they fail to achieve goals. Given that the goal of an undergraduate program is for students to develop a career path, career uncertainty may be viewed as a failure to achieve the goals of undergraduate education. Summarizing some of the effects of career uncertainty as found by authors such as Dekker and Schaufeli, as well as Ito and Brotheridge (as cited in Trevor-Roberts, 2006), it was noted that career uncertainty can cause negative health effects, particularly increased stress. In an undergraduate student context, a study of Taiwanese college students and their perceived career uncertainty elaborated on some of the consequences of uncertainty, and found that negative side

effects were frequently present (Tien, Lin, & Chen, 2005). A number of these side effects were categorized as physical, emotional, as well as behavioural, and included students at times feeling some of the following: tired, sleepless, helpless, anxious, depressed, unhappy, discouraged, self-doubt, and a lack of confidence (Tien et al., 2005). Relatedly, Mossakowski (2011) found that individuals who achieved an education level lower than expected or found themselves out of the work force had higher chances of depression symptoms. While this is slightly different from the focus of this study, it warrants concern for the phenomenon associated with students having expectations entering the internship, and in turn, not succeeding, or having expectations not met. Good or bad, expectations and the internship experience have some influence on the student. Further, the stated definition of subjective well-being involving how individuals interpret events in their lives could certainly prove relevant to this internship experience with a multitude of desired or expected benefits being sought.

### **Sport Management Internships**

Cunningham et al. (2005) were the first to take a closer look at the negative side of internships in sport management and how they affect students. According to Cunningham et al. (2005), their reasoning is that while there was a lot of literature focusing on the benefits of internships, much of it seemingly ignored potential adverse effects of a negative internship experience. Further, there was minimal research (particularly in sport) that studied the impact of internships on career intentions of students. The main aspect of their study that guides this thesis conceptually is that of career intentions, which are made up of three self-explanatory measured concepts: anticipated career satisfaction, occupational commitment, and intention to enter the

industry (Cunningham et al., 2005). After Cunningham et al. (2005), in 2014, Odio et al. noted that academics are increasingly showing concern for the actual value of these internship experiences, and if expectations are being met. Odio et al. (2014) justified a need for additional research on potential outcomes of inadequate student internships by stating that these negative experiences could act as deterrents from the industry itself. They also added that sport management as a discipline cannot gain relevance to the sport industry if students are being discouraged from working in this industry by a component of their academic experience (Odio et al., 2014).

Further, beyond simply being discouraged from sport, as is addressed in this study, the impact on student well-being must be considered. As discussed previously, Diener et al (1999) mentioned how individuals react negatively when they fail to attain goals; in this case, not having a successful internship could incite negative affect. As well, Mossakowski (2011) acknowledged that not achieving socioeconomic goals is indicated in the literature to be linked to psychological distress and depressive symptoms. Further, the potential negative effects of career uncertainty (see pages 8-9) warrant this research due to Odio et al. (2014) also having noted career uncertainty being frequent amongst participants following their sport management internship. This escalating focus on negative internship experiences in sport management, and the potential to deter students from entering the industry they have spent upwards of four years studying for, while impacting individual well-being, warranted a need to further examine such a possible correlation.

The current study aimed to illustrate the connection that exists between stimulus events, intern experiences, career decision making, and well-being within a sport

management program. Stimulus events are defined in this study as notable instances (i.e., positive or negative) in the internship that influence the students' desire to continue in this industry, consider alternate career options, and/or influence individual well-being as a result. Career decision making is defined as involving a student's desire to remain in their position, sector of sport, or the sport industry as a whole (Cunningham et al., 2005). This decision making involves concepts such as role satisfaction, anticipated satisfaction, and commitment to the sport industry (or sport sector) that are influenced by the internship experience. Well-being is defined as involving three components in relation to the student and how their internship has an influence on this: emotional well-being (positive or negative affect of student), psychological well-being (functioning well in life), and social well-being (functioning well socially; Lamers, Westerhof, Bohlmeijer, ten Klooster, & Keyes, 2011).

The importance of these key concepts is to address a problem that seemingly exists regarding internships. While there is an abundance of internship literature, as will be reviewed in the literature review chapter, quite a bit conflicts in that the purpose and benefits are frequently outlined, but negative occurrences are reported as well. There will be literature discussed that outlines benefits of paying interns, yet many frequently go unpaid, and this is a difficult situation for any student that is already stuck paying off thousands of dollars in debt for an education in Canada (Burley & Awad, 2015). Therefore, it is crucial to review the internship experience from the students' point of view to determine what is causing a positive or negative experience. Further, it is important to explore how the internship expectations-experience influences student career intentions, and potentially their well-being as a result. This well-being component in

particular is vital when exploring the significance of the internship expectations-experience association. The following section outlines the purpose and research questions that will guide the literature review and methodology.

### **Research Purpose and Questions**

As stated, and will be further detailed in Chapter 2, internships are influential experiences for students (Bennett, Eagle, Mousley, & Ali-Chodhury, 2008; Day, 2012; O'Neill, 2010). Therefore, it becomes important to determine what types of events – i.e., stimulus events – occur during internships and the outcomes of these events for student interns. The purpose of this research is to examine the nature and perceived influence of stimulus events on student career decision making and subsequently well-being, within the context of student internship experiences in a sport management program. Following this purpose, the research questions are:

1. What is the perceived nature of stimulus events related to internship experiences of sport management student interns?
2. What is the perceived relationship between internship stimulus events and career decision making among sport management undergraduate interns?
3. What is the perceived relationship between career decision making and student well-being among sport management undergraduate interns?

In an effort to address the purpose and research questions, the following theoretical and conceptual frameworks were adopted.

### **Theoretical Framework**

To serve the purpose of the study, the theoretical framework of this research consists of an adjusted version of Lee and Mitchell's (1994) Unfolding Model of

Employee Turnover. This model was based on Beach's Image Theory (as cited in Lee and Mitchell, 1994) which is a basic decision-making model. Within Image Theory, there are three image domains that inform decision making: value, trajectory, and strategic (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). The value images represent the "values, standards, and individual principles that define a person" (Lee & Mitchell, 1994, p. 58). The trajectory image signifies the goals and influences that "energize" a person, which guides the individual's behaviour (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). The third image, strategic image, represents the "behavioural tactics and strategies" that the individual believes will most effectively achieve their goals (Lee & Mitchell, 1994, p.58). Image Theory proposes that individuals are faced with endless information "bombarding" them and they process it through "screening"; this involves evaluating the information based on the three defined images (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Much of the information does not pass the screening process, but if it does, the individual considers it against the status quo and weighs the desirability of change (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). This Image Theory was based around everyday decisions such as new recommended ways of dieting, or advertised purchases such as books.

Lee and Mitchell (1994) took this Image Theory and developed their own model where they applied it beyond everyday decisions, to turnover in the workplace. The general idea of Lee and Mitchell's (1994) application of Image Theory to employee turnover is that a shock event happens to the individual which causes them to determine the implications of it in relation to their job. Further, decisions made based on a shock may or may not include the consideration of job alternatives. Lee and Mitchell (1994) defined four decision paths (technically five – path 4 is broken up into 4A and 4B) which represent the ways in which "employees may come to leave their jobs over time" (p.60).

This Unfolding Model of Employee Turnover is based around work employees, and is less applicable as a whole to internships because it assumes employees go through this process over a longer period of time, as implied in the previous quotation. Internships, including those involved in this study, typically cover four-month time periods.

Therefore, applying the original model's decision paths leading to turnover in this current study is not appropriate given that interns quitting their internship is rare (due to the short duration), and with the anticipated benefits to be gained by students from staying, such as experience and networking opportunities. Due to this, the decision paths involved in Lee and Mitchell's (1994) model are adjusted to focus on a shift in career goals of the student, therefore being more applicable to the context of the study. To understand decision paths, it is important to first define more specifically what constitutes a "shock" in this study.

For the purpose of this study, shocks (referred to as stimulus events in this study) are important in terms of how they affect intern career intentions and well-being. A shock in the Unfolding Model was defined by three main components, the first that it must be a "jarring" event in that it is very distinguishable and "jars employees toward deliberate judgments about their jobs", and may lead to fairly substantial shifts in attitude/behaviour (Lee & Mitchell, 1994, p. 60). Second, shocks can not only be categorized as negative, but they can also be positive or neutral (Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Lee, Mitchell, Holtom, McDaniel, & Hill, 1999). Third, shocks are also defined as internal or external to the employee's job, meaning examples could include receiving alternative job offers or not receiving an internal promotion (internal), or suffering from family issues or winning the lottery (external; Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Lee et al., 1999). Notably though, Mitchell et al. (2001) felt that shocks and the extreme behaviour related to the shock seemed to typically



occur outside of their job (e.g., winning the lottery). Finally, a shock can be classified as expected or unexpected (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). When relating to literature regarding internships where unrealistic student expectations of internships are in surplus, unexpected shocks were assumed to be prevalent (Lee et al., 1999).

A vital point made by Lee and Mitchell (1994) is that a shock must create job-deliberations and considerations of leaving, which is important to note for the purpose of this research. While maintaining the Unfolding Model, shocks were broadened to include and be referred to as what Lee and Mitchell (1994) referenced from Rosse and Miller's work as stimulus events. The crucial differentiation between a shock and stimulus event for this study is that the stimulus event only needs to be considered noticeable to the individual; it does not need to be an event that challenges an individual's values (jarring; Lee & Mitchell, 1994). As previously stated, for the purpose of this research and due to the shorter duration of internships, the term stimulus event was used, but encompassed shock events as well, therefore not limiting participants to only report jarring occurrences. In the case of the internship, small, noticeable, positive stimulus events, for example, could compound and have an influence on career intentions. Additionally, the definition highlights that stimulus events occur at one point in time. For example, hypothetically, the focus would not be on internship supervisors in general, but rather specific interactions with a supervisor that may or may not impact interns' outcomes.

Further, while the focus of this study was primarily on internal internship stimulus events in an effort to provide practical recommendations that can be managed by educators and sport mentors, a secondary consideration was external stimulus events to account for outside influences. Additionally, the stimulus event's impact will be classified

as small, medium, or large, based on the student rating each event on a rating scale that ranges from -10 to +10 (Appendix G). On this scale, ratings of -1 to -3 represent a small negative impact, -4 to -6 a medium negative impact, and -7 to -10 a large negative impact. Oppositely, ratings of +1 to +3 mean a small positive impact, +4 to +6 a medium positive impact, and +7 to +10 a large positive impact.

Three of the five decision paths relevant to the current study are presented next, followed by a brief explanation of the two decision paths (4A and 4B) that were merged into one, and the final path that was deemed irrelevant to the internship context. For the purpose of relating to the current purpose and context, the word shock from the theory has been replaced by stimulus event.

The first decision path involves a stimulus event leading to the individual carrying out a predetermined script, meaning if the stimulus event were to happen, the individual knew beforehand that this type of stimulus event would cause them to quit (Harman, Lee, Mitchell, Felps, & Owens, 2007; Lee & Mitchell, 1994). In the case of the current study, the outcome variable would be a change in career intentions or a shift in the perception of the career moving forward. An example of this decision path would be if the intern knew that interning for a sports team would involve members of the organization being asked to assist in game-day operations on weekends in addition to their regular work hours. Therefore, the intern was aware he/she may be asked to assist beyond regular work hours, was unwilling to sacrifice weekends to help out, and as a result determined that being involved in all aspects of the organization's operations was not rewarding (i.e., shift in career intentions away from game-day operations).

The second decision path relevant to this study involves a stimulus event that the individual weighs against their value, trajectory, and strategic images, and in turn results in an evaluation of alternative career options (Harman et al., 2007; Lee & Mitchell, 1994). The differentiation from the first path is that there is no predetermined script, meaning the stimulus event is an unexpected occurrence. An example of this decision path is if the student learned while interning that working for a sport team involves longer hours and sacrificing weekends to assist with the game-day operations, therefore becoming a more demanding career than the intern expected. The student may view this negatively as they do not like the idea of losing weekends (e.g., a value for leisure time) and having a more unpredictable schedule in terms of work hours. Therefore, the stimulus event went against the individual's images, be it goals, values, or strategy (Harman et al., 2007; Lee & Mitchell, 1994), and the result is a change in career intentions.

Lee and Mitchell (1994) proposed alternative decision paths that were broken into decision paths 4A and 4B. Both paths involved no stimulus events that result in an individual's job satisfaction being low; however, decision path A involved the individual leaving their job without considering other options, while decision path B involved the individual leaving their job after having looked for other alternatives work-wise, weighing options, and then leaving (Harman et al., 2007). Despite this distinction within the theory between these two paths (A and B), there is no distinction in the current study. Specifically, due to the focus on interns' career goals shifting as an outcome rather than employee turnover, this single decision path will involve simply no significant or obvious stimulus events occurring. Instead, the intern could find the internship unappealing or not satisfying by the end and will want to move on in some form (i.e., different job, sector, or

industry). Oppositely, it could be a good experience where nothing significant happened, but was not as rewarding as expected to the participant.

It is important to note that one of the original model's decision paths was excluded from this study. The justification is that the Unfolding Model, as previously stated, focuses on how individuals quit their jobs over time and a key part of that decision is the consideration of alternatives when the job-change process occurs. This consideration was also incorporated into decision paths 4A and 4B, as explained on page 17 (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Similar to Odio et al. (2014), vocational turnover was not the focus of the current study, but rather shifts in career decision-making were the focus in that paths with a consideration of alternatives were deemed unnecessary. For example, a change in career intentions such as a newfound departmental interest (e.g., becoming interested in ticket sales) does not involve or require alternatives being considered; rather, a shift simply occurs. Specifically, the path (Harman et al., 2007; Lee & Mitchell, 1994) that involves a stimulus event occurring, with no prior script, followed by the individual weighing the shock against their images, and deciding to quit with no evaluation of alternatives was omitted.

In sum, Table 1 outlines the key theories and concepts relevant to this study and helps to inform the decision paths discussed beforehand. The next section will outline the conceptual framework that is connected to the theory around stimulus events attached to the purpose of this study.

### **Conceptual Framework**

This study includes important concepts that inform career intentions and well-being of interns. Regarding career intentions, the three concepts come from the

Cunningham et al. (2005) study on intern versus non-intern career intentions within the sport industry. Cunningham et al. (2005) listed these three concepts as anticipated career satisfaction, occupational commitment, and intention to enter the sport industry.

Cunningham et al. (2005) defined anticipated career satisfaction as an anticipative state that results from “positive experiences and processes associated with the sport management profession” (p.45). Furthering this definition, there are five key areas that are related to anticipated satisfaction (Cunningham et al., 2005). These five brought up by Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Wormley (as cited in Cunningham et al., 2005), are anticipated success in the industry, pay, progress the internship will contribute towards the achievement of career goals, opportunities for advancement, and skill development opportunities. The second part that makes up career intention in this study is occupational commitment, which is defined by Lee, Carswell, and Allen (as cited in Cunningham et al., 2005) as a psychological link that exists between the individual and their occupation, which is similar to anticipated career satisfaction, and is based on “affective reaction” (p. 45). Lee et al. (2000) suggested that those individuals that exhibit strong occupational commitment also identify strongly with, and demonstrate positive emotion towards their profession (Cunningham et al., 2005). This is vital when applied to interns as the result of their internship (be it positive or negative) is deemed to play a role in their occupational commitment to both the organization they interned with, and more importantly, the sport industry as a whole (Cunningham et al., 2005). The third concept, intention to enter the sport industry, is self-explanatory and revolves around the students’ desire to pursue a sport management career; the presumed path upon attaining a sport management degree (Cunningham et al., 2005). Therefore, based on these concepts, positive and negative

THEORY/MODEL	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	KEY PARTS
<b>Image Theory</b> (Beach)	Basic decision-making model that Unfolding Model of Employee Turnover (UMET) is based on. States that individuals have three images that information is weighed against to determine if change is desirable.	<b>Images</b> <b>1) Value Image:</b> values or standards that define a person <b>2) Trajectory Image:</b> goals that energize a person and guide their behaviour <b>3) Strategic Image:</b> strategies a person believes they can use to best achieve their goals
<b>Unfolding Model of Employee Turnover</b> (UMET; Lee & Mitchell)	Proposes that a shock (jarring event; positive or negative; internal or external to job) occurs which spurs change and leads to employee quitting their job over time. Four main decision paths (technically five as fourth path consists of 4A and 4b).	<b>Decision Paths</b> <b>1)</b> Shock occurs, individual carries out predetermined script. Means person knew that if this shock were to happen, they would quit. <b>2)</b> Shock occurs with no prior script, followed by individual weighing shock against their images, and the result being decision to quit with no evaluation of job alternatives. <b>3)</b> Shock occurs, individual weighs against their images, and does evaluate alternative career options before quitting. <b>4A)</b> No shock occurs, individual quits without evaluating career alternatives. <b>4B)</b> No shock occurs, individual does evaluate career alternatives before quitting.

<b>UMET in Internship Context</b> (current study)	Adjusted UMET model where using “stimulus events” instead of shocks; stimulus events will include both jarring or minor events. Instead of quitting job, model applied to interns shifting career intentions. There are three applicable decision paths instead of four.	<b>Decision Paths</b> <b>1)</b> Stimulus event occurs, student carries out predetermined script, results in career intention change. <b>2)</b> Stimulus event occurs, student weighs against images, results in career intention change. <b>3)</b> No stimulus event occurs, still results in career intention change.
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*Table 1.* Key theories and proposed model involved in study (with exception of Met Expectations Model).

experiences were expected to have opposite impacts on career intentions.

The second key outcome within this study’s conceptual framework is that of well-being, or more specifically subjective well-being. As outlined on page 8, subjective well-being focuses on both perceived positive or negative affect (moods and emotions), and life satisfaction which involves how an individual interprets the events in their life (Diener et al., 1999). In this study, the measure of subjective well-being was slightly more inclusive and broken up into three aforementioned components: emotional well-being, psychological well-being, and social well-being (Lamers et al., 2011). These three components highlight ratings of the affect of the individual (e.g., happy, interested in life), and conceptualizes life satisfaction into how well the participant feels they are functioning in life (good at managing the responsibilities of daily life, that life has a sense of direction or meaning), as well as socially (that they had something important to contribute to society; Lamers et al., 2011). With well-being defined as involving the affect of the individual as well as how they interpret events in their lives, it is proposed

that interpretation of stimulus events and the perceived influence of stimulus events on intern career intentions will impact well-being.

The third aspect of this study's conceptual framework (not included in Table 1 due to simplicity of the model) consists of Porter and Steers' (1973) Met Expectations Model. This Met Expectations Model was hypothesized based on previous literature (as cited in Porter & Steers, 1973), which similarly determined that there was a relationship between an employee's perceived autonomy and turnover. Ross and Zander (1957) took some of these earlier findings further and found that when comparing individuals who stayed versus those who left an organization, both groups had similar expectations of autonomy when they entered the organization. But, Ross and Zander (1957) found that those who had left the organization reported significantly lower levels of experienced autonomy. Ross and Zander concluded with the simple, but important, statement that when employees' needs are satisfied, they are more likely to stay with their organization. Porter and Steers (1973) also found two studies by Taylor and Weiss, as well as Waters and Roach (as cited in Porter & Steers 1973) that signified a positive relationship existed between inclination to stay with an organization and an individual's perceived autonomy and level of responsibility. Further, Porter and Steers (1973) cited Weitz's (1956) findings that when an organization provided a much clearer job description to the employee and enhanced their understanding of what to expect, retention increased. This relates to Todd et al.'s (2014) work described earlier in relation to sport management and realistic job previews, as Weitz (1956) also provided in-depth descriptions of the tasks involved in the job, including average hours spent on each, with images detailing each task.



Porter and Steers (1973) found a general positive relationship between job content dissatisfaction and turnover. Due to this, they defined job satisfaction as the degree to which an individuals' expectations within the job were met in that the more expectations are met, the higher the satisfaction (Porter & Steers, 1973). Based on these determinations, Porter and Steers (1973) conceptualized that by nature, individuals bring their own personal expectations into a job. These tend to be based around aspects of the job such as "pay, promotion, supervisory relations, and peer group interactions", but, individuals can also find challenging work or the status associated with particular jobs to be similarly rewarding (Porter & Steers, 1973, p.170). The idea being that different individuals set different expectations. This ties in with Todd et al.'s (2014) sport industry findings of realistic job previews, which will be further discussed in the literature review, but looked at how individuals' expectations of identical tasks differed between higher status teams versus lower status teams.

The main concept behind the Met Expectations Model is that it is "*those* factors" (italics in original) or expectations that are unique to the employee that must be "substantially" met in order for the employee to determine if the position is desirable and worthy of commitment (Porter & Steers, 1973). Due to individuals bringing their own unique expectations, it becomes crucial that there is greater cooperation and communication between employees or interns, and organizations, in order to better understand each other's expectations (Coknaz, 2014; Donina, 2015; Porter & Steers, 1973; Yiu & Law, 2012). Concluding this discussion of the conceptual framework, career intention changes, or lack thereof, was studied by combining the results of the adjusted definition of shocks (stimulus events) and decision paths from Lee and Mitchell's (1994)

Unfolding Model of Employee Turnover, and the Met Expectations model presented by Porter and Steers (1973). Additionally, Mossakowski (2011) indicated that unmet expectations could negatively influence individuals and was associated with symptoms of depression. Specifically, Mossakowski's (2011) findings were related to individuals finding themselves out of the workforce, or not reaching an expected education level. Due to this association between individual well-being and expectations, as well as issues around intern expectations (unmet and/or unrealistic) for the internship experience and anticipated benefits, the exploration of subjective well-being as a relevant internship outcome is justified.

Specifically, combining the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, Figure 1 (p. 25) outlines the application of stimulus events in respect to their magnitude and impact on career intentions and subsequently the well-being of interns. As seen in Figure 1, it is proposed that the impact of stimulus events on participant career intentions will in turn influence well-being. First, stimulus events were categorized as internal or external to the internship experience. Next, stimulus events were classified in terms of their influence on career intentions. Finally, the influence of stimulus events and changes in career goals on well-being was explored. It is important to note that within the model there is one alternative outcome proposed to occur where no stimulus events are experienced by the student, but well-being or career intentions could still see changes. This is reflected in the dotted line within Figure 1 on the next page.

The theoretical and conceptual frameworks helped frame the analysis of the nature and influence of stimulus events on student career decision making and subsequently well-being within the context of sport management student internships in

one academic program. This purpose was addressed using an explanatory case study methodology, and included a mixed methods approach. This will be defined and outlined in Chapter 3 of this document.

The goal of this study was to fill a number of gaps in the internship academic literature, particularly that of sport management. There is minimal research on internships in general in sport, and much of the existing literature primarily focuses on the benefits of the internship experience. This research aimed to help uncover the nature (positive or negative) of stimulus events that occur within internships, the magnitude of the stimulus events, and how stimulus events influence student decision making and subsequently affect. The findings could potentially contribute to new knowledge in the areas of management and educational-based literature and practice. For example, the findings

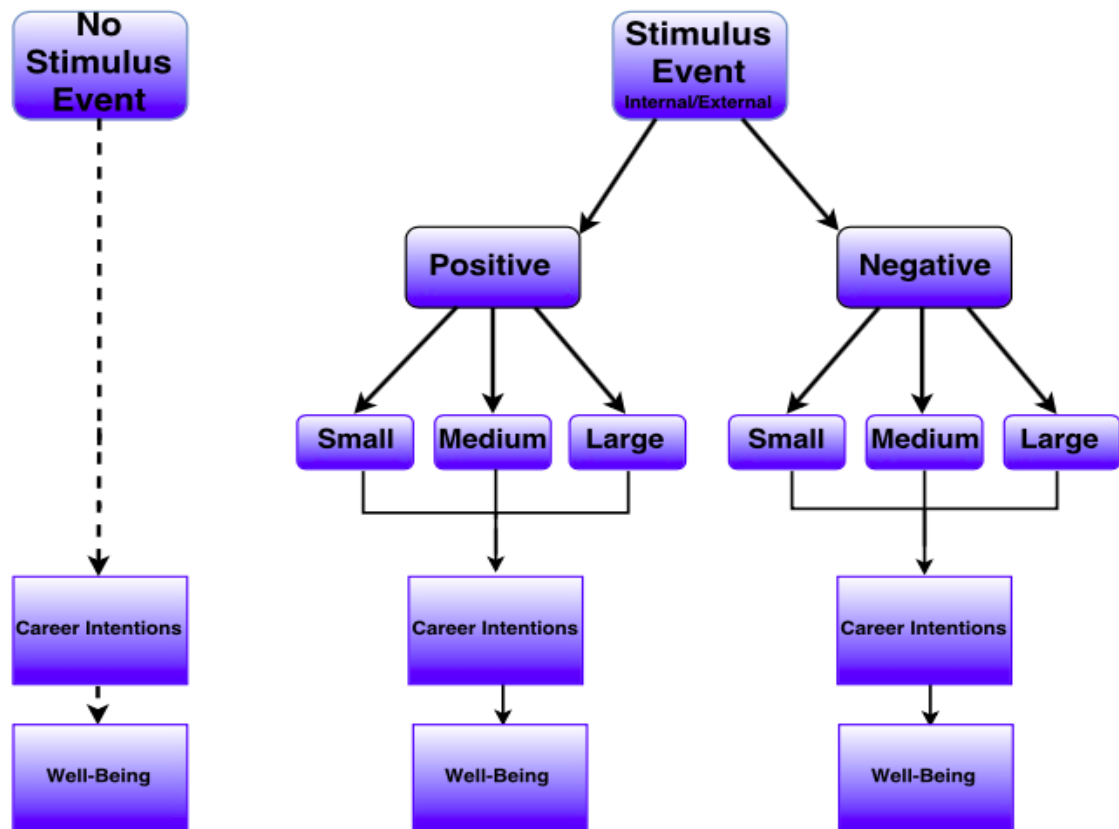


Figure 1. The proposed framework of the relationship between stimulus events and the outcomes of study.

shed light on the constructs that impact the decisions of future sport managers as well as their well-being. This study builds from Odio et al. (2014) to apply the Unfolding Model of Employee Turnover to the intern decision making context.

In terms of sport management education practice, this research will indicate aspects of the internship experience that could be managed (prior to the internship) to better prepare students for the stimulus events that may occur within the internship that have the potential to influence the student moving forward.

This thesis consists of six chapters where the study's importance, theoretical and conceptual framework, as well as the research purpose and questions are addressed in the first chapter. The second chapter will delve into the existing literature on internships, and what is known in relation to these experiences. In the third chapter the study's methodology and research design will be presented and justified. The fourth chapter will present the findings resulting from the different data collection methods. The fifth chapter will outline the research findings in relation to the original purpose and questions set forth. Finally, the sixth and final chapter will review the limitations, recommendations, and conclusions of this study.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This section will outline and detail the current literature regarding internships and the related factors associated with this thesis. First, the benefits and also issues associated with internships will be presented, followed by covering the symbiotic relationship that exists between parties involved in internships. Next, the paid versus unpaid component of internships for students is discussed, and how the literature weighs on the difference between the two. Following this will be a discussion of the unrealistic expectations students possess when entering an internship. The last theme covered and defined in the literature will be “sandwich-placements.” Finally, a review of the sport management internship literature will be provided, followed by a discussion of the two main outcomes of this study in relation to stimulus events: career intentions and well-being.

### **Internship Benefits**

Internship programs allow students to gain relevant experience in their prospective industry as previous experience is typically required for employment (Bennett et al., 2008). While the literature does not consist of a universal definition or set of standards for internships (Odio, 2017), it is important to note the internship context of the current study consists of a full-time (450 hours) for-credit, four-month experience, with some students earning an honorarium, but intern salary or compensation not a requirement. Intern reimbursement for personal expenses during the internship (e.g., meals while on site, mileage) is up to the discretion of the internship placement representative(s). There is also a project component that is agreed upon between the internship supervisor and course instructor. Regardless of how the internship is designed, Bennett et al. (2008) provided previous literature and benefits surrounding internships

that include improving students' self-confidence before entering real workplace situations, learning and adjusting to organizational norms, and fostering a smoother transition from school to the workplace.

There are benefits echoed throughout much of internship literature, starting with the self-confidence component which Chen and Chen (2011) stated came with the work experience. Surujlal and Serra (2014) provided student perspectives on internship benefits and discussed the self-confidence that came along with students being put into a situation where they needed to develop and implement relevant skills. Relating back to Bennett et al.'s (2008) point about transitioning to the workplace, this also ties in with McMahon and Quinn's (1995) early research that positions the internship as the phase or bridge that brings together education and practice (cf., Maertz et al., 2014). This stage allows the student to take what they have learned in the classroom and finally apply it; doing so in an internship position gives the student an environment with less pressure as it is meant to be a learning experience (Kasli & Ilban, 2013; O'Neill, 2010; Walo, 2001). In turn, Maertz et al. (2014) stated that the internship leads to accelerated job performance in the industry due to the experience that is generated from the work completed within the internship position. McMahon and Quinn (1995) presented it correctly and simply; the internship gives the student experience that cannot be replicated in the classroom.

Relatedly, this experience gained from the internship goes beyond the skills involved with specific jobs. Barnett (2012) and Maertz et al. (2013) acknowledged that the placement can introduce the student to stressors and the shock associated with first adjusting to the workplace, and better prepare them to handle expectations in this regard. In particular, Barnett (2012) stated that students who have not completed internship

placements may get frustrated when adjusting from the culture of the classroom to the culture of the workplace. Supporting this adjustment, Ko (2008) found that students who have completed internships take less time adjusting and learning, and require less training once they enter the workforce.

Maertz et al. (2013) broke down the numerous internship benefits listed in the literature into three categories: career-related, job-related, and networking or job market-related. Specifically, career and job-related benefits involve: (a) improving working habits, (b) improving social and personal efficacy (linked to self-confidence), (c) developing a better understanding of one's work and career values, (d) achieving higher salaries when starting out, (e) developing the ability to evaluate and determine if the current company is one the intern would like to continue with, and (f) increasing the potential for a job offer (Maertz et al., 2013). A critical component of this process is gaining a better understanding of what the student values and is interested in, and one that students who do not intern miss out on earlier in their career.

**Experience and salary.** In what is claimed to be the first empirical study looking at internships and career success, Gault, Redington, and Schlager (2000) found greater success in terms of salary for students who intern versus those who do not. Additionally, Gault et al. (2000) also found that alumni who had done internships had received job offers on average ten weeks sooner than those who did not do an internship, and enjoyed typically faster promotion rates. In 2010, Gault, Leach, and Duey found similar internship benefits, and recommended schools suggest them for students. In reviewing the importance of internships, Hurst et al. (2014) stated that 69% of students with summer internships in an Apparel, Merchandising, and Design program (AMD) – Family and

Consumer Sciences – reported that their internship served as confirmation of their career choice; this is an important point in relation to the following discussion on effective career planning.

From a different perspective, Brooke and Carton (2013) stated that interning gives the student a chance to get a more realistic view of the profession they are entering. Therefore, if an aspect of the job or part of the industry turns out to be undesirable to the student, they can plan accordingly and look for a more preferable position. Theoretically, if a student does not have an internship experience, they may uncover their displeasure with an occupation when they finally get a full-time job and it could leave them in a frustrating position. Maertz et al. (2014) reaffirmed this by stating that the internship allows for better career planning in this regard, which in turn results in more success in the industry. Further, they state that the internship experience gives the student the opportunity to pursue “person-job” and “person-organization” fit early on in their career, rather than a trial by error process (Maertz et al., 2014).

Besides the career related benefits mentioned by Maertz et al. (2014), Brooks and Youngson (2014) reviewed how placements help differentiate students from those who do not complete an internship. Furthering this, Brooks and Youngson (2014) indicated that placement students are differentiated from non-placement students in regard to initial employment upon graduation, as the internship experience itself adds to their employability. Specifically, they wrote that the top employers of graduates have approximately 37% of their positions filled by students who had previous experience with the same organization, meaning the sample organizations frequently hire from within (Brooks & Youngson, 2014).



Though they referenced older literature, Maertz et al. (2014) acknowledged that students who completed internship placements received higher starting salaries than those who did not. This comparison is common in any job market: the more experience you have, the more money you will be eligible to receive when starting. Adding to this, Brooks and Youngson (2014) compared salaries of previous placement and non-placement students in the United Kingdom (UK), and found that those who had done placements were earning approximately £2132 more than their non-placement counterparts, which in Canadian dollars at the time of the study's publication, was \$3,857.21.

Beyond organizations hiring employees from within, employers frequently require that candidates have some form of experience in order to be considered for a job (Bennett et al., 2008; Burke & Carton, 2013; Hurst et al., 2014). Interestingly, Bennett et al. (2008) stated that some employers view experience as more important than the degree itself. This may not be the case everywhere, but it reinforces how highly valued some form of internship experience is to employers (Robinson, Ruhanen, & Breakey, 2015). Additionally, Barnett's (2012) findings indicated that students did not fully understand or appreciate the importance and significance of the courses they were taking until they immersed themselves in the working environment. Further, a pattern Barnett (2012) found with students was them realizing how important communication was within the workplace, something they had not grasped fully before completing the internship. In turn, a meaningful internship experience leads to a more positive transition to a working environment (Bennett, 2012). This idea helps explain why many employers require students have workplace experience such as internships.

**Networking.** One of the main benefits of the internship experience is the networking opportunity it affords (Burke & Carton, 2013; Glenn & Mattei, 2014; Hope & Figiel, 2011; Ko, 2008). The advantage of developing a professional network, according to Glenn and Mattei (2014), is that when positions open up within organizations, individuals hiring tend to look to those in their own network first. Therefore, while an individual may not currently be looking for a job, opportunities will present themselves that otherwise would not (Glenn & Mattei, 2014). While it is not expected that students will have extensive networks upon graduating, the internship can provide that first step in building such a network.

While students may not fully understand the importance of networking prior to the internship, Barnett (2012) found that by the completion of an internship, students had a greater appreciation for the skill required in a given job or occupation. Not only is networking beneficial for finding future job opportunities, but also the referrals an individual can get from their network are important for achieving industry positions. In Barnett's (2012) research, graduates stressed the importance of continually networking and taking advantage of the opportunity to do so while interning.

### **Internship Issues**

As mentioned, a growing body of literature (over the past decade especially) has focused on issues that plague internships, many of which seemingly revolve around being unpaid. Caddell et al. (2013) used the term "elitism" which refers to the situation and favouritism that exists with many internships being unpaid. To reiterate, in Canada alone in 2014 there were approximately 300,000 unpaid young Canadian interns, which Burley and Awad (2015) indicate consists of individuals aged 15-24 years old. The elitism

component that Caddell et al. (2013) refer to is a result of efforts to enhance students' employability and skills through internships, yet then having individuals excluded who simply cannot afford to work for free. This is becoming more evident with the mounting debts that students are accumulating while completing a university or college program. The main issues that will be discussed in this section include the cost to a student of taking on an internship, the conflicting and unrealistic expectations that students have entering the internship, as well as the supervisor's role in the internship experience itself.

**Cost of internships.** Burley and Awad (2015) show that when a student takes out a Canada Student Loan, they are now graduating on average with a debt of over \$28,000. A concern especially with having to take on internships late in a students' education such as their final year, or after graduating, is those students who rely on loans and take on debt to finance their education do not see the full impact of their tuition fees until post-graduation when the debt has compounded and interest has added up (Burley & Awad, 2015). Another form of compounding relates to unpaid, or minimally paid, internships. Burley and Awad (2015) stated that 23% of graduates of post-secondary school are not working in their field of study, or close to it, because of the need for an immediate source of income to pay off debts. Though a small example, students in Ontario using the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) loan have a six-month "grace period" after graduating where there are no interest charges on their loan, therefore putting pressure on students to find a source of income to take advantage of this interest-free period ("Pay back OSAP", 2015). As discussed by Burley and Awad (2015), this pressure in turn can cause skill degradation because students may fall behind in terms of experience and networking opportunities by working in alternate industries – time which other graduates

who can afford unpaid internships spend furthering their career. Caddell et al. (2013) similarly wrote that some students find themselves torn between the decision to gain relevant experience in their industry and improve their resume, or take paid employment elsewhere to help pay debts and cover living costs. This is a decision that can surely cause stress.

Hope and Figiel's (2012) article highlights this concern regarding the necessity of internships, where an anonymous survey of interns done by the Low Pay Commission (LPC) revealed that of 283 "ex-interns", 37% of them had completed three or more internships. This is an alarming number when considered alongside the debt concerns of students, as it shows how difficult it can be to secure work. Burke and Carton (2013) posed a relatable question in this regard: "Who but the economically advantaged can afford to pay tuition and living costs while working without remuneration?" (p. 123). To expand on this, who can afford to undertake *three* potentially unpaid, or even minimally paid internships, in order to enhance opportunity at receiving full-time employment?

Before discussing the importance of internships being properly paid, having mentioned paid and unpaid internships, it is important to briefly acknowledge honorarium-based internships (Maertz et al. 2014). Narayanan, Olk and Fukami (2010), similar to much of the literature, (Maertz et al., 2014), simply place internships into two categories (paid or unpaid), but the honorarium-based internship is popular in Ontario sport management internships, and with it being the location of this study, it is relevant to mention. With an honorarium, the organization will give the intern a small sum of money upon completion of the internship to help cover some of the incurred costs such as commuting. Sometimes this honorarium may be as low as a few hundred dollars,

potentially up to over one thousand dollars. While it is better than no compensation, compensation is limited as any overtime hours worked, such as on weekends or late evenings, are not reimbursed to the student (McMahon & Quinn, 1995; Lam & Ching, 2007; Yiu & Law, 2012). As mentioned on page 27, the honorarium was not a guarantee in this study's context, as the internships were for-credit (i.e., part of an undergraduate program).

Though not a major focus of this research, a noteworthy issue is the legality of organizations not paying interns (Burke & Carton, 2013; Caddell, Mcilwhan, Irving, Smith, & Smith, 2013; Odio et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2015). In Ontario under the Employment Standards Act (ESA), unpaid internships are illegal; however, there are six exceptions that must be met for it to be legal:

1. The training is similar to that which is given in a vocational school.
2. Some benefit is received by the trainee from the training, such as new knowledge or skills.
3. The employer derives little, if any, benefit from the activity of the trainee while he or she is being trained.
4. The trainee does not take someone else's job.
5. The employer is not promising a job at the end of the training.
6. The trainee has been told that he or she will not be paid for his or her time.

(“Internships and the Employment Standards Act”, n.d.).

Relatedly, Burke and Carton (2013) found that most internships in the United States are likely in violation of one of the six criteria of the Obama administration's Fact Sheet #7 and therefore eligible for employee status by the Labor Department. Interestingly, a UK

based study reported that the National Union of Students and University College Union (NUS/ UCU) found that only 10% of students knew unpaid internships were illegal in the UK (Hope & Figiel, 2012). This is relevant and important because Burke and Carton (2013) stated that paid internships were reported by students as more positive experiences than nonpaid internships.

Paying an intern changes the dynamic of the internship, including the expectations, requirements, and attention given (Caddell et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2015). One manager reported that in unpaid internships, they (managers) were just focused on the process, whereas in paid internships, they expected to see more tangible results from the student (Smith et al., 2015). Further, managers found they got more out of their interns when the position was paid as students felt more valued and rewarded for their work (Smith et al., 2015). Further, Friedman and Roodin (2013) cited a report by the National Association of Colleges and Employers from 2011 that identified a “distinct advantage for paid internships versus unpaid internships among students being hired directly after graduation” (p. 3). From a simplistic level playing field perspective, paid internships open the opportunity to everyone with the required skills in that internship area, rather than just those that can afford to work for free (Caddell et al., 2013). This warrants reference back to the Burley and Awad (2015) report finding that 23% of post-secondary graduates are not working in or close to their field of study due to the need for immediate income to pay off debts. Not only are these paid internships seemingly more esteemed, but they also allow graduates to pay off compounded debts while progressing their desired career.

One additional point worth stating here in relation to the benefits of paid internships is from the preliminary findings of a study coming from two researchers at the University of Victoria, in British Columbia (Canadian Press, 2014). These researchers claim that the majority of the 300,000 intern population in Canada are women, and are minimally paid, or not paid at all (Canadian Press, 2014). This has implications, as just reviewed, as it has been indicated that paid internships are more valuable and beneficial than unpaid internships. If these findings are true, this is concerning that women hold the majority of unpaid internship positions. It was worthy of mentioning, although this study will not dedicate a major focus towards gender-based internship results. Beyond issues and debates around the payment of interns, a major concern noted frequently in the literature is that of unrealistic expectations, particularly on behalf of the students.

**Conflicting expectations.** Caddell et al. (2013) also stated that many of the organizations who accept interns are torn ethically and weigh the costs of paying students for their work versus the constraints they face financially. Unfortunately, many authors note that a significant amount of organizations use internships as cheap labour (Coknaz, 2014; Kasli & Ilban, 2013; Koc et al. 2014; Narayanan et al., 2010). Narayanan et al. (2010) found that one of the immediate benefits of interns to an organization is that of cheap labour and the efficiency that comes with hosting an unpaid staff member. In Koc et al.'s (2014) study based out of Turkey, the authors acknowledged that many tourism and hospitality organizations in the country operate in an opportunistic manner and can be selfish by using cheap labour in the form of interns. Further, many organizations do not have the intention of focusing on developing the intern in terms of skills and experience, indicating a bottom-line focus where the organization naturally comes first

(Koc et al., 2014). Kasli and Ilban (2013) similarly established that this cheap labour issue does not lead to professional development, and sometimes improper conditions are found within intern placements. Chen and Chen (2011) found that the adoption of internships based on the notion of cheap labour was not lost on the interning students in that students were uncomfortable and felt inferior in these settings, which raises questions about some of the internships being conducted.

Due to these problems associated with the conflicting nature and purpose of internships, Hope and Figiel (2012) argued that internships can be seen as barriers to entry to industries. Their reasoning relates back to those who are not economically privileged enough to afford unpaid internships, which can hold them back (Hope & Figiel, 2012). It could be different if job offers awaited the majority of interns after their internships, something Maertz et al. (2014) provided as a benefit to interns. However, the main citation used by Maertz et al. (2014) regarding the benefits of job security following the internship was cited from 1988, which is outdated. This is important to note because the LPC Interns Anonymous survey cited in Hope and Figiel (2012) demonstrated findings contrary to the noted benefits. Specifically, their study revealed that 40% of ex-interns were still unemployed, and 82% of internships did not lead to any form of employment with the organization (Hope & Figiel, 2012).

Lam and Ching (2007) in an earlier study found that when it came to expectations before and perceptions after the internship, employment opportunities with the interning organization was one of the bigger gaps in terms of expectations being met. Day (2012) noted that the expectation of internships always leading to jobs is one of the most common misconceptions of students involved in internship placements. This theme of



unmet or improper expectations is important to the purpose of the study, and will be discussed in greater detail later in this review of the literature.

**Unrealistic expectations.** Narayanan et al. (2010) stated that the more prepared a student is entering the internship experience, the greater they will learn from it and the better the outcome should be. On the other hand, concern is raised by numerous authors about students not being properly prepared for internships, and much of this argument stems from unrealistic expectations (Barnett, 2012; Chen & Chen, 2011; Cunningham et al., 2005; Lam & Ching, 2007; Robinson et al., 2015). An early study by Waryszak (as cited in Chen & Shen, 2012) mentioned that unmet expectations of students during their internship would discourage students from entering an industry such as tourism and hospitality, upon graduation. Lam and Ching (2007) found that student perceptions and expectations did not match in that expectations went unmet regarding their internship placements. Similarly, Yiu and Law (2012) found that there is an imbalance of expectations between the students and employers within the internships. Importantly, they found that the expectations component of the internship is a two-way relationship (Yiu & Law, 2012). The employer must understand the expectations of both the student (in order to better meet both the goals and needs of the student), as well as the organization; this ties in with the Met Expectations Model outlined in the Chapter 1 reinforcing the importance of meeting unique expectations (Yiu & Law, 2012). Alternatively, the student must understand the employer's expectations to better anticipate what to expect and not be taken by surprise (Yiu & Law, 2012).

Day (2012) studied ten students entering internships and found misplaced expectations of students were related to lowered internship efficacy. Specifically, Day

(2012) discussed the costs of an oftentimes unpaid internship and the unanticipated demanding hours that tend to amount to full time work. In these cases, students will not likely have time to work side jobs in order to earn additional income to cover rent, tuition, food, or other daily costs such as commuting (Day, 2012). Thus, stress and dissatisfaction result from misinformed expectations of the hour demands of an internship. Additionally, Day (2012) presented common student mistaken expectations regarding how involved an internship supervisor will be in terms of teaching the student, and that due to economic conditions, the organization may not be able to afford to specifically assign a mentor to the intern. This can lead to the intern reporting to different individuals with different expectations, and ultimately overwhelm the student (Day, 2012). Related to Yiu and Law's (2012) previous point, Day (2012) acknowledged that students may underestimate what their supervisor expects of them, assuming that by being selected for the internship means they are prepared and have little to learn. Lastly, Day (2012) warned future interns that internships do not always have positive endings, particularly in regard to being offered employment afterwards. These mistaken expectations can compound and in turn negatively affect career intentions, motivations, and student (or individual) self-confidence (Day, 2012).

It becomes clear that there is a gap between expectations and reality, and Barnett (2012), as well as Chen and Chen (2011) noted that the internship is supposed to be what minimizes or eliminates this gap. Yet scholars continue to acknowledge poor expectations as being problematic (Koc et al., 2014). Barnett (2012) wrote that many business student interns were surprised by the difference between what they expected versus the actual experience, and that many went through a culture shock in particular. Barnett's (2012)

study revealed positive results from students though, as they seemingly acknowledged adjusting to the new experience and expectations accordingly (Barnett, 2012). Chen and Chen (2011) recommended that to bridge the gap between expectations and experience, the internship placement program should provide students with tours of the industry in order to acclimate them to the environments they will be entering (Chen & Chen, 2011).

Some unexpected results in the tourism and hospitality literature came from Robinson et al. (2015), as they found that students were entering the program with little, or no, actual career aspirations or direction in the industry as a whole. This is concerning as students may be blindly entering this program with no actual commitment to the industry, therefore expectation issues are bound to occur (Robinson et al., 2015). This also would increase the need for educational institutions to inform students of what to expect from the industry earlier in order to determine if this is still a desirable career path (Robinson et al., 2015). Additionally, this should be considered by scholars of other industries such as sport management to determine if it is a common theme.

**Role of the supervisor.** Some issues that Lam and Ching (2007) attributed to potentially leading to student internship dissatisfaction revolved around the manager or supervisor. These included the manager not treating the intern fairly or providing sufficient job rotation, and managers not following pre-set programs or tasks that were determined prior to the internship starting (Lam & Ching, 2007). Further, Burke and Carton (2013) reported dissatisfaction from interns is caused by the student being given menial tasks as assignments that serve minimal or no developmental purposes. Worse, there are cases reported where interns are sent on personal errands for managers instead of gaining relevant experience, therefore being exploited (Burke & Carton, 2013). Chen

and Chen (2011) specified that to reap the benefits of an internship, the work a student is given needs to be meaningful to the organization and the student. If this is not the case, the internship experience may lead to an increase in stress and a decrease in the students' intentions to continue in their desired industry.

These key internship issues reviewed outline where the experience itself can go wrong, at least as has been reported in related literature. An important dynamic that must be discussed is the importance and elements of the symbiotic relationship between the three key stakeholders involved in internships: the students, university, and internship organization.

### **Symbiotic Relationship**

McMahon and Quinn (1995) referred to the internship experience as a “tripartite” relationship, while Odio et al. (2014) deemed it to be a symbiotic relationship due to the ability of the experience to provide benefits to three parties: the intern, the organization, and the educational institution of the interns. The intern benefits to this point have been covered at length. In terms of the organization's benefits, these take the form of fresh and keen students looking to contribute however they can (Walo, 2001). Creating internship opportunities also allows companies to screen potential employees in the form of a trial run (Cunningham et al., 2005; Lam & Ching, 2007; Walo, 2001). With this, the intern becomes a known or lesser risk if the organization wants to hire the student afterwards because they understand what they are getting (Maertz et al., 2014). Maertz et al. (2014) also wrote that the internship benefits the organization by allowing the intern to focus on “value-added emergent or ‘back-burner’ projects” that otherwise would not get done, in turn permitting full-time employees to focus on prioritized projects (p. 130). Lastly,

companies are finding new students can bring new perspectives and ideas that older employees do not (Donina, 2015; Smith, Smith & Caddell, 2015). As for the educational institution, they see benefits through the creation of contacts, and in turn, being aware of developments within the industry (Cunningham et al., 2005). These developments can instruct teaching methods for the educational institutions as well (Cunningham et al., 2005). Narayanan et al. (2010) also note this aspect of knowledge transferring between parties, though the directionality needs to be further studied. Maertz et al. (2014) offered some additional benefits regarding marketing strategies, as the school can attract more students by offering relevant and desirable internships. Furthermore, they state the internship program, when it goes well, can benefit the school by increasing the school's student job placement numbers and creating loyal alumni, who then may go on to donate and give back to the school (Maertz et al., 2014).

Robinson et al. (2015) referred back to this symbiotic relationship in discussing the key elements involved in ensuring a successful internship. It involves, beyond the intern, proper planning of the internship and task design, which requires adequate involvement from industry managers, not simply bringing in interns and putting them to work (Robinson et al., 2015). Further, the organization needs to provide support for situations of problem solving, proper training, and reasonable performance appraisals (Robinson et al., 2015). Additionally, it includes support and consultation being provided by the school or program for which the intern is housed; it is much more than simply helping students find a position (Chen & Shen, 2012; Robinson et al., 2015).

Lam and Ching (2007) also brought up concern around support for the student from the organization, which is also highlighted by Chen and Shen (2012). Chen and

Shen (2012) recommend that this should involve: “pre-internship supports, ongoing consultation, and a post-internship review” (p. 37). Particularly, this enhanced support would be valuable in problem-solving situations, where they worried that a lack of experience and support from the organization could lead to, as mentioned previously, “psychological distress, depression, and frustration” (Lam & Ching, 2007, p. 348).

**Internship design.** A critical element to discuss is the importance of proper internship design, as brought up by Holyoak (2013), where she notes that when intern development is the focus of the internship itself, all three parties benefit from this proverbial transaction. Unfortunately, her research indicated that development is not always optimal. In fact, there were four main outcomes determined by Holyoak (2013): (a) optimal development; (b) non-development by intern (i.e., intern is not satisfied); (c) supervisor irritation (i.e., intern does not apply him or herself appropriately, such as lacking motivation); and (d) dissatisfaction that is mutual, meaning the intern and organization are both not fulfilled by the internship experience. Holyoak (2013) fortunately did write that the majority of the internship experiences reported in her sample fell into, or close to, the optimal development category. Regardless, much of the literature indicates that intern development or satisfaction is not where it should be.

Abdullah et al. (2015) argued relatedly that the reason behind poor design is that the internship organizations predominately focus on their own needs. Abdullah et al. (2015) notably stated that unfortunately, organizations simply hire interns based on organizational needs, rather than to develop a student. Instead of development, the interns serve as a “cost saving initiative”, which refers back to the previously covered discussion on cheap labour (Abdullah et al., 2015, p. 35). Abudullah et al. (2015) also cited Koc et

al. (2014) who elaborated on reasoning behind students who are turned away from their industry, which is mainly due to a lack of cooperation between all parties involved in the internship. Koc et al. (2014) noted that the lack of cooperation in Turkey may be attributable to design and implementation issues. This is where they state the higher levels of cooperation are needed, as all parties (e.g., the intern, the academic program, and the host organization) should be responsible for contributing.

Donina (2005) also discussed a heightened need for cooperation among internship stakeholders, and that this must occur in all stages of the internship, which includes the “planning, organisation and control and feedback phases” (p. 89). Donina (2015) sampled 154 middle or lower managers in tourism and hospitality organizations and found that 46% of the companies were not at all (or minimally) involved in the planning stage of an internship experience. Further, Donina (2015) stated that only 3% of the participants reported that the educational institutions contacted the managers throughout the internship itself. This means that the school is only involved during the planning phase and outcome assessment stage at the end of the internship, not during the internship. Thus, if there are any problems during the internship, they may go unaddressed by the academic institution (Donina, 2015). A main conclusion, to reiterate, is that more school involvement is needed during the internship itself, as tourism and hospitality managers are confident that it would help achieve the goals of the internship for the student (Donina, 2015).

Narayanan et al. (2010) presented some supplementary points on where the organization is falling short in terms of internship design. First, the authors found that a mentor within the internship, even if only for brief periods, was crucial for the intern, as

they could provide feedback (Narayanan et al., 2010). Further, the more involved the mentor is, the better the outcome of the internship (Narayanan et al., 2010). Second, beyond support, the student needs more of a voice in the internship process as their research indicated that it leads to increased satisfaction; the authors recommend the students seek this voice in the process (Narayanan et al., 2010). This increased voice of the student would ideally enhance communication and aim to solve another related issue found by Friedman and Roodin (2013). Friedman and Roodin (2013) found that supervisors believed students were more satisfied with the internship than the interns actually reported, indicating a disconnect was occurring. Specifically, where supervisors assumed contentment, interns were not as pleased with aspects of the internship such as providing information for use in their career development, and co-worker support (Friedman & Roodin, 2013). The nature of internship design may also play out when examining where the internship takes place within the academic program.

**Sandwich placements.** Realistically, it is difficult to determine how to go about such changes in fixing expectations of students aiming to enter the industry. One interesting alternative that is particularly applicable to programs where the internship is completed in the fourth and final year of the program is called a sandwich placement. A sandwich placement is defined as essentially a normal internship, but rather is “sandwiched” between years, which in Binder, Baguley, Crook, and Miller (2015), falls between second and third year, while in Brooks and Youngson (2014), falls between third and fourth year. By being placed between years, the internship acts as a break between classes, which students noted was seen as a benefit (Little & Harvey, 2006). Length-wise, they can range from six-ten week brief experiences, up to almost a year long, depending



on the program (Little & Harvey, 2006). Regardless, the important aspect is the placement of the experience (Brooks & Youngson, 2014). Students who completed sandwich placements were compared academically in their second and fourth year, and were found to have higher grades, as well as higher grade increases over the years than non-placement students (Brooks & Youngson, 2014). Binder et al. (2015) echoed this improved academic outcome from sandwich placements. Further, the benefits already discussed by Brooks and Youngson (2014) regarding faster and increased employment were based on students who had completed sandwich placements.

The students interviewed in Little and Harvey's (2006) study praised the sandwich placement in that it made them seemingly more motivated students, and they appreciated course work more having experienced the industry and seeing how it related. In general, they felt like they became stronger students in their habits, and had a different, more effective approach to learning (Little & Harvey, 2006). This is largely due to the fact that the students could relate to the material they were being taught due to their experience in the industry, therefore creating a more effective learning atmosphere (Little & Harvey, 2006).

Relating this back to the internship potentially turning students away from the industry, an earlier industry experience could also close the expectations-reality gap earlier in the students' academic career. Additionally, it could help students tailor their classes towards a part of the industry they now know they want to work in, assuming the internship peaks their interest in some regard. Lastly, if the industry turns out to not be what the student envisioned or hoped for, at the worst, they have found out up to two years earlier and can start planning career alternatives while they are younger and can

save money in the process.

In terms of payment, these internships showed similar findings to other literature in that some were paid placements, while others were unpaid (Brooks & Youngson, 2014; Little & Harvey, 2006; Reddy, & Moores, 2006). These sandwich placements do seem to be more common in the UK from the literature (Brooks & Youngson, 2014; Little & Harvey, 2006; Reddy, & Moores, 2006), but essentially are reminiscent of placements that occur in trades programs such as engineering. One positive implementation with these sandwich placements was shown by one program who only allowed students to intern four days every week, which left one day per week open for the student to work outside of their internship in order to help cover costs incurred, especially those working for free (Little & Harvey, 2006). This program was also working towards having students work two to three days a week to be more accessible and leave time for students to gain outside employment (Little & Harvey, 2006). Similar to the internship literature reviewed previously, students in Little and Harvey's (2006) study stated that when they were paid, they felt more pressure during their internship – like an actual member of the team – as well as received more respect. Given the unpaid nature of the majority of sport management internships (Odio et al., 2014) and the implications discussed earlier, it is important to explore internships specifically related to the sport industry.

### **Internships in Sport Management**

While important aspects of internships have been discussed with reference to the relevant literature, these essential topics must be reviewed in relation to sport management, the discipline of focus in this study. The first internship component that will be discussed is the importance of networking through internships in sport management.

Additionally, negative internship experiences in sport management will be examined, including potential outcomes of such experiences, as well as the issues that may cause them. The impact of unrealistic expectations in sport management placements will be covered, and followed finally by discussion regarding internships in sport.

**Networking in sport management.** Scholars Kornspan and Duve (2013) heavily emphasized the importance of networking to sport management students specifically, and highlighted the need to develop networking skills. Kornspan and Duve (2013) acknowledged how crucial networking is in the sport industry due to the amount of students graduating and looking for work. The competition for jobs has only increased (Kornspan & Duve, 2013). One reason behind this importance is that as of 2008, according to Stier (as cited in Kornspan & Duve, 2013), there are 38 sectors within and related to sport that have existing jobs for students. They affirm that positions exist in areas of sport such as “recreational, interscholastic, collegiate, and professional sports as well event management, facility management, tourism, and the sporting goods industry” (Kornspan & Duve, 2013, p. 6). This begs the question of whether or not students are aware of just how many opportunities there are. Regardless of the student awareness, one way to find these openings is through networking (Glenn & Mattei, 2014; Kornspan & Duve, 2013). Kornspan and Duve (2013) argued the importance of networking beyond internships, and states schools need to teach networking via classes, guest visits, and/or site visits in the industry. One additional benefit of networking presented in the sport industry by Todd et al. (2014) is that it allows students to acquire more realistic previews of what to expect in the industry from professionals with first-hand experience. This

relates back to the discussion about students figuring out what they do, or do not want to do, earlier rather than later by trial and error.

As implied, the sport management literature is still lacking in areas of internship research. What is currently known is relatable and similar to other sectors and findings reviewed thus far. Specifically, early internship literature by Gault et al. (2000) stated that individuals who did internships during their undergraduate program saw greater success in their career in extrinsic areas such as starting salary and current salary (at time of the study, typically close to two years after starting in the industry) compared to those who did not intern. Cunningham et al. (2005) discussed the importance of a sport management internship on career decision making as well. In a study with a sport management department's students who had completed internships, Coknaz (2014) found that students saw the experience as positive especially when interactions with other employees were positive, and they were treated as an employee themselves. This in turn resulted in, as implied, a positive view of the industry and desire to remain in it going forward (Coknaz, 2014). An interesting addition to the sport internship literature was Surujlal and Serra's (2014) study on job rotation in sport management internships. The University of Johannesburg implemented a new aspect to their sport management internship program by adding job rotations (Surujlal & Serra, 2014). This meant that regardless of the organization the student was interning for, they would get to experience different aspects and roles involved (Surujlal & Serra, 2014). Further, this made the students more marketable as they had experience in different areas of a sport organization, and gave the students a better understanding of what they may want to do in terms of a specific job moving forward (Surujlal, 2014). Such job rotation areas involved: "facility management,

event management, general administration, human resource management, gymnasium, marketing and commercialisation and scholarships and finance” (Surujlal & Serra, 2014, p. 107). Despite these internships potentially being beneficial, and a major factor in students’ career decision process (Odio et al., 2014; Robinson et al., 2015), internship literature reveals a number of concerning issues.

**Negative sport management internships.** Coknaz’s (2014) study focused on sport management internships in Turkey and found that these students faced many of the same issues other students in related literature dealt with. Coknaz (2014) mentioned that this includes problems around being viewed as cheap labour, insufficient communication, long hours, including overtime (not anticipating it being an expectation), while also facing financial problems, and jobs deemed inappropriate which in turn leads to them finding little to no benefit being received upon completion of the internship. Furthermore, Coknaz (2014) cited Lam and Ching (2007) in showing concern for students possibly suffering from “psychological distress, depression and disappointments” due to many negative issues arising in internships (p. 53). More to the point, negative issues around internships seem to involve a lack of awareness of what sport management is, and a murky understanding of what tasks should be delegated to a “sport manager” (Coknaz, 2014). This is difficult to discern in the literature in general and a tough point to argue or confirm, but nonetheless, something to consider.

**Unrealistic expectations in sport internships.** Coknaz (2014) mentioned that a good internship experience is supposed to close the expectations gap, but one student acknowledged just how big the school-work gap was in terms of what they learned and expected from that environment. It is important to note that this involved an organization

in the public sector of sport and that two students had echoed this concern and expressed disinterest in remaining in this sector of sport as a whole (Coknaz, 2014). This does not seem to be a recent occurrence in sport management literature either, as Surujlal and Serra (2014) cited Cuneen (2004) who stated that internships were not living up to expectations, and while they were supposed to be an integral component to the degree, they were turning out to simply be supplementary. Alternatively, Wiest and White-King (2011), on the topic of what students want to learn versus what actually occurs in internships, wrote that only a few authors have published literature on this topic. All were printed in 2004 or earlier which is troubling (Wiest & King-White, 2011), particularly with the amount of literature in general (outside of sport management) indicating a disconnect between expectations and what occurs in the internship.

**Impact of sport internships.** While there are not unanimous aspects of the internship that the literature has determined guarantees a negative internship versus a positive one, Surujlal and Serra (2014) presented some common occurrences in their study of 24 sport management honours students. The most frequent were: interesting job rotations were too short, managers restricting autonomy, insufficient as well as inappropriate work opportunities, managers lacking professionalism, task levels were not up to the level of interns, and lastly, hours reported as too demanding (Surujlal & Serra, 2014). These issues do, for the most part, echo what has been discussed within other industries. Regardless, Coknaz (2014) found that the internship, be it positively or negatively viewed, serves as a major influence on students wanting to work in the sport management field. Odio and Kerwin (2016) found that the support of the supervisor, as well as the degree of challenge within the internship in terms of tasks and workload, were

strong intern satisfaction predictors. Additionally, the main area interns had an issue with was opposing instructions, which could have been a result of different supervisors (Odio & Kerwin, 2016). This relates to Day's (2012) discussion around multiple supervisors potentially overwhelming interns.

Odio et al.'s (2014) study of interns after their experience revealed that significant events occurring during the internship could lead to dissatisfaction and thoughts of leaving. Four of the twelve students interviewed wanted out of, or left the industry (or their section of the sport industry) after their internship (Odio et al., 2014). Reasoning for these students wanting to leave involved losing a desire to remain in the industry (the internship turned them away from sport), one found it exhausting and not matching their values, and one simply wanted to switch from large-scale to small-scale events (Odio et al., 2014).

Hess (2009) studied "trigger events" that were reported by previous interns who were in the sport industry at the time of the study, and how they impacted leadership development. While Hess (2009) was not specifically focused on the internship context itself, the trigger event categorization was relevant. In relation to the current study, Hess (2009) grouped trigger events as positive or negative, and planned or unplanned (versus expected or unexpected in the current study). Hess (2009) found that the four common trigger events were grouped around the following life experiences: attending university, experiences working post-graduation, the death or illness of a loved one, and the beginning or ending of a romantic relationship. While Hess' (2009) study of trigger events is similar in looking at the impact of influential events on individuals, the trigger events were focused on significant life experiences and leadership development, whereas

the current study focuses predominantly on events within the context of the internship experience of students.

Coknaz (2014) also wrote that gender was an obstacle to a career in the field of sport management. Though Coknaz (2014) did not delve into this issue deeper, it brings up questions of gender equality in sport management, a topic Wiest and King-White (2011) addressed, as author Amber Wiest investigated her own internship experiences involving dissuading incidences – one example being verbal manipulation of others for profit – that occurred and affected her career pursuit in the field. Wiest completed three internships in sport management which progressively led her to see the issues that were occurring in this industry (Wiest & King-White, 2011). Throughout her internship experiences she was forced to do things that went against her beliefs and morals, one which included fabricating statistics for an event and facing "overt sexism" (Wiest & King-White, 2011, p. 211). In turn, it led to Wiest looking for a way out of this internship and the sport industry as her faith in the industry had "crumbled" (Wiest & King-White, 2011, p. 212). Examples such as this beg the question: is this occurrence of female students being turned away from sport happening frequently?

Cunningham et al. (2005) conducted one of the earlier studies in sport on the relationship between internships and career intentions. In comparing intern and non-intern sport management students, they found that the interns after their experience had lower anticipated career satisfaction, occupational commitment, and intentions to remain in the industry (Cunningham et al., 2005). The students' attitudes were still fairly positive towards the industry after, but echoed concerns that negative experiences could potentially turn students away. As well, in citing Verner, Keyser, and Morrow, the authors



reinforced an important aspect of the internship that has been discussed in other contexts – the beneficial nature to all parties involved (Cunningham et al., 2005).

This literature in the sport management context highlights the importance of the internship experience to students, particularly the networking opportunity it provides. While literature such as Cunningham et al.'s (2005) study has simply stated that internships can affect career intentions, it is important to further review this concept by highlighting specific experiences that may affect intention. Further, as mentioned, well-being is an important focus of this research, and in particular how well-being may relate to the internship experience and student expectations. This is an area that currently has little to no literature, hence the association between internship experience and well-being is exploratory. If there is an association between internship experience and well-being, this connection could have important implications for internship programs moving forward and warrants study. The following concluding sections will highlight the relevant literature on the two outcomes of interest in the current study: career intentions and well-being.

### **Career Intentions**

As previously mentioned, Hurst et al. (2014) discussed the important role of the internship experience on AMD program student professional development and career decision making. A great experience, such as presented in Hurst et al. (2014), confirms a students' desire to remain in their industry. In this regard, similarly, Chen and Chen (2011) found that a positive experience leads to high satisfaction, which in turn causes the students to “identify with the industry” (p. 90). But a negative experience where issues arise within the internship is argued to alternatively have negative effects. Early research

in 1990 by West and Jameson (as cited in Chen, Hu, Wang, & Chen, 2011) presented the belief that the more students interned, the less likely they were to want to remain in that particular field when done school. Likewise, Fox (as cited in Chen et al., 2011) claimed that students can be deterred from an industry due to a bad experience with their internship. Chen and Chen (2011) wrote that negative feelings from the internship experience can cause lowered devotion towards an industry, in turn potentially leading to a career transition. Chen et al.'s (2011) study, besides citing older literature on the potential negative effects of a poor internship experience, aimed to further explore this relationship from the student's perspective. They found that the majority of students did not express much, if any, negativity towards their internship (Chen et al., 2011). But, those that did report a negative experience, identified the reasons for that negative experience being due to unequal treatment because of their status as interns, being ordered around, and feeling like low-cost labour (Chen et al., 2011). Further, if negative experiences occurred, it caused unpleasant feelings and could lead to consideration of a transitioning of careers (Chen et al., 2011).

One final study that is important to acknowledge in relation to this concern was completed by Koc et al. (2014), which looked at negative tourism internships and the resulting impact on career intentions. These authors found that of 603 interns studied, 18.3% wanted out of the entire industry after its completion. Koc et al. (2014) state this may mean up to \$100 million is wasted yearly as a result of students dropping out of the industry, and the main reason they argue for these poor numbers are improper expectations from students going in; once again, a key theme that arises. This \$100 million waste was extrapolated from the 18.3% of students from the study that wanted out

of the industry, in relation to the number of students that were in tourism in Turkey in 2009, which was 11,691, and multiplied by the estimated cost of \$8,455 (tuition) per student (Koc et al., 2014). Also concerning, Koc et al. (2014) described other low commitment numbers from certain areas of tourism, such as 94% of students who interned in housekeeping did not want to pursue a career in that part of the industry. Further, they stated that this could mean 94% of all tourism housekeeping internships are a waste of resources. Though it is not this authors' place to say otherwise with certainty, students wanting to work in another area of tourism due to their internship cannot be considered a waste of resources with such conviction. As has been discussed, this can be seen as a benefit. The student gets experience and learns that they should pursue a different path in an industry, rather than gaining employment and finding out it is undesirable that way. Koc et al. (2014) interestingly present more of these "wastage rates" such as 61% for front desk interns and 74% for interns in entertainment services. Regardless, it is concerning that so many students had negative internships, and leads into discussion of how this may potentially relate to student well-being.

### **Well-Being**

An important relationship that will be explored is the perceived effect of internship stimulus events and experiences, as well as student expectations, on well-being, particularly as a result of the impact on career intentions. It is worth noting that there are a number of attempts at defining the concept of well-being and how best to measure it, however, Dodge, Daly, Huyton, and Sanders (2012) stated that defining well-being has remained essentially unsolved. Further, Thomas (as cited in Dodge et al., 2012) provided a seemingly accurate assessment and said that not only is well-being intangible

and tough to define, but also it is even more difficult to measure. This is shown by a foundation of research that is conflicting, and the main agreement that has come about is that well-being is a multidimensional concept (Dodge et al., 2012). Dodge et al. (2012) cite work from 1969 by Bradburn as one of the early main scholarly attempts to define the concept which was termed psychological well-being – he sometimes referred to it simply as happiness – and represented a shift from psychiatric diagnosis, to a more subjective approach that was determined by how regular people interpret their lives (Dodge et al., 2012). Bradburn's (as cited in Dodge et al., 2012) definition of well-being in essence is the degree to which, or result of, positive affect exceeding negative affect in a person's life – positive affect representing pleasant feelings such as being happy, versus negative affect being more depressive feelings (Luhmann, Hofmann, Eid, & Lucas, 2012). This direction of well-being research focusing on the importance of affect falls under the classification of "hedonic tradition", which Dodge et al. (2012, p. 223) wrote is one of the two main approaches to defining this concept.

One critic of this psychological well-being conceptualization was Ryff (1989) who argued that there is more to well-being than simply an affective emphasis. Further, she argued that well-being has been defined "at the expense of more enduring life challenges such as having a sense of purpose and direction, achieving satisfying relationships with others, and gaining a sense of self-realization" (Ryff, 1989, p. 1077). Ryff (1989) concluded by stating that the key "facets" to psychological well-being are: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. This focus by Ryff represents the second approach to studying well-being and falls under the "eudaimonic tradition"; eudaimonic refers to

Aristotle's early notion of well-being (Dodge et al., 2012, p. 223). Despite Ryff's eudaimonic approach to well-being "(highlighting) positive psychological functioning and human development," and being critical of the more affect-based approach from early research, Dodge et al. (2012) acknowledged that Diener and Suh's well-being literature also focused on the affective component.

Diener et al. (1999) wrote about the three components of what they called "subjective well-being" (SWB) consisting of positive affect, negative affect, and overall life satisfaction. Diener et al.'s (1999) positive and negative affect definitions mirror those mentioned recently, which represent peoples' emotions and moods, and their evaluations of events in their lives. A more inclusive version of well-being was used in this study rather than just looking at positive versus negative affect. The well-being measure by Lamers et al. (2011) that was used, and will be discussed in Chapter 3, involves three previously mentioned components: emotional well-being (positive or negative affect of student), psychological well-being (functioning well in life), and social well-being (functioning well socially). Specifically, the aim was to determine if internship experiences influence a shift in career intentions, and subsequently well-being as a result. If such a shift exists, then it could signify the need for follow-up in regard to what specifically caused that shift.

**Expectations and well-being.** Similar to there being little research on internships and well-being, there is minimal research on well-being and expectations, and none could be found with internships as a part of the relationship. Diener et al. (1999) presented an interesting discussion on SWB in relation to goals, which in this case would potentially equate to expectations. Diener et al. (1999) stated that goals "serve as an important

reference standard for the affect system” (p. 284). Further, the discussion on goals relates to what goals individuals set, the structure of these goals, how successful they are in achieving these goals, and progress rate made towards the attainment of the goals (Diener et al., 1999). These aspects revolving around goals “can all potentially affect one’s emotions and life satisfaction,” and that people react positively when progress is made towards their goals, and if they fail to attain goals, react negatively (Diener et al., 1999). Similarly, Mossakowski (2011) found that when individuals achieve an education level lower than expected and find themselves outside of the labour force, it was a predictor of subsequent depression symptoms. Further, Mossakowski (2011) noted that these findings match other literature on stress from “goal-striving” that implies not “(achieving) socioeconomic aspirations is associated with symptoms of depression and psychological distress” (p. 734).

Another study done by Klug and Maier (2014), which cited Diener et al.’s (1999) work and other literature related to SWB, brought up the notion of goal attainment and its effect on SWB. The purpose of their study was to complete a meta-analysis and determine under which circumstances goal progress is found to relate to SWB (Klug & Maier, 2014). They found that goal striving when successful is correlated to SWB, and noted it as one of the most important links (Krug & Maier, 2014). Although stated with caution and uncertainty, they believe individuals successful in attaining their goals could immediately achieve greater well-being levels (Krug & Maier, 2014). Regardless, they restate the importance of successful goal striving and SWB (Klug & Maier, 2014).

Additionally, while a different focus, Van der Vaart, Linde, and Cockeran (2013) looked at employees’ psychological contract being satisfied and the relationship with

intention to leave, and the mediating factor of well-being. In citing Bal and Kooij as well as Rousseau (as cited in Van der Vaart et al., 2013), psychological contracts are defined as “mental models through which employees interpret and predict the employment relationship,” and that within the employment relationship, the two parties perceive if promises or obligations were met (p. 357). While this is more relationship-based between employee and employer, Van der Vaart et al. (2013) did find that an employees’ experience with this psychological contract directly impacted their well-being as well as intention to leave. More specifically, they found that “a positive evaluation of the psychological contract lead to positive emotions and job attitudes and ultimately lowers the employee’s intention to leave” (Van der Vaart et al., 2013, p. 364). While not specifically looking at the relationship of this study, this indirectly lends to the idea that intern expectations not being met could impact well-being.

Finally, Schwandt (2016) looked at a U-shape cycle that economic literature has found in well-being that indicates it begins at a high level, sees a major decline in satisfaction in midlife (20’s to 50’s), followed by an increase in later years where less regret occurs. This theory has been argued to be the result of unmet expectations (aspirations) occurring in the midlife stage (Schwandt, 2016). Schwandt (2016) mentions some attempts at studying how SWB relates to goals and decisions people make in their life, but they seem to focus on changes they could make in the future to increase satisfaction, and are deemed by this author as seemingly irrelevant. While this is a minor point, it was worth noting the U-shape trend that a decrease in well-being may be the result of unmet expectations and aspirations. These mentioned studies are the reason the importance of expectations becomes relevant, as the theme of unrealistic expectations

was discussed at length already as a relatively frequent occurrence with students and internships.

**Sport.** The existing literature on athletes' well-being has some relevant research that is worth mentioning briefly, starting with Smith, Ntoumanis, and Duda (2004). These authors found that goals set autonomously, or "autonomous motives," were shown to predict effort positively towards what Smith et al. (2004) refer to as goal striving. Further, this effort positively predicted goal attainment, which was then found to link positively to psychological need satisfaction (Smith et al., 2004). The important focus here as it may relate to this current study is that the athletes' own effort towards their goals, when motivated autonomously (or freely), assisted in goal attainment, which in turn can cause psychological well-being. So, in the context of an internship, this may be relatable to the expectations set by the student; meaning if they are set accurately and met, then well-being could increase, or remain higher. While this is more so an example for the purpose of relating this literature to this study, it serves to indicate what relationship may exist.

In looking at well-being and certain variables that affect well-being within elite athletes such as motivation and personality, Lundqvist and Raglin's (2015) initial findings indicated that need dissatisfaction was a strong indicator of their stress and well-being results. While need dissatisfaction literature is minimal, the authors consider that need dissatisfaction, more than need satisfaction, may cause negative affect in athletes, but that further research needs to uncover more knowledge on the most significant indicators of athlete well-being (Lundqvist & Raglin, 2015). Lastly, they noted that their findings found need satisfaction, self-esteem, and concern for perfection to be additional indicators of athlete well-being (Lundqvist & Raglin, 2015).



Having presented the key literature around internships, including the purpose and benefits, as well as the main issues discussed around these experiences, this study's methodology will be covered next. In doing so, this author's positionality in relation to the topic of study will be reviewed, as well as the sample, data collection and analysis methods, how trustworthiness was addressed, and the limitations of the study. To examine the nature of stimulus events, and their potential relationship with intern career intentions or well-being, a mixed methods explanatory case study was used.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

This methods chapter will cover the different components that make up the study's methodology. Initially, this includes the researcher's position in relation to the topic, and therefore how the study came to fruition. This chapter will also detail the methods involved in carrying out the study, such as data collection and analysis, and other decisions or considerations involved in these stages. Lastly, included in the appendices are additional study documents such as the data collection instruments, letter of invitation, and consent letter.

### Reflexivity

Willig (2001) states that reflexivity revolves around how the researcher's personal stance on the topic of the study influences the study itself. This influence can come from the researcher's goals, interests, beliefs, values, and experiences, to name a few (Willig, 2001). Further, this reflexivity can influence how the study is designed, carried out, and in turn, the findings that result. This indicates just how important the researcher's position on the topic of study can be. If it were not for my experiences and position on this topic, this research likely would not have been developed.

**Positionality.** The idea to study internships initially came from my personal experience in an undergraduate sport management program when considering completing an internship. In the fourth year of my degree I was set to do an internship, but ended up doing coursework and worked part-time as the internship options at the time did not appeal to me, particularly the aspect of working unpaid for a semester. I found the internships available were not appealing enough to work under those conditions. Over the

next two years I began to learn of friends and sport management program acquaintances who had completed internships in the field of sport, and had gone through negative experiences. This was concerning as the potential benefits of internships (as they have been reviewed) seemed crucial, particularly: professional work experience, skill development, and networking opportunities. Yet, I continued to learn of students who did not receive the expected benefits from the internship. Some individuals saw these internship placements as a waste of time with little benefit to the student. That is a major concern, as an element of a student's academic program intended to be a significant step towards entering the industry, can possibly deter them from a sport career. Initially this study aimed to explore the nature of negative internships, which could be seen as a bias to some in that I was looking for negative cases only, which in turn would lead me to presenting a more negative situation than actually existed (this is addressed more in the trustworthiness section). Regardless, this potential bias turned into a desire to understand, to some degree, what is occurring (i.e., stimulus events) with sport management student internship experiences. Additionally, there was a desire to explore how these stimulus events impact sport management students' career intentions moving forward, and finally, if stimulus events have an effect on student well-being. While some may argue that a student simply wanting out of the sport industry is not a very worrisome end result, an impact on a student's well-being (particularly if in a negative manner) certainly was a concerning prospect.

### **Case Study Methodology**

Due to the desire to explore potential associations between the variables of interest, an explanatory case study approach was chosen. As defined in Savin-Baden and

Major (2013), the explanatory case study aims for explanation or finding an associative relationship that may exist. In the case of internships, the potential influential relationship that may arise is that of internship stimulus events determining, or at least influencing, students' future career decisions. Additionally, the well-being component was looked into in regard to how stimulus events from an internship affect the student's career intentions, and then well-being, if at all. Further reasoning behind this choice is the flexibility given to, and thoroughness of, the researcher in terms of numerous data collection methods that can be used to form a better view of the case being studied (Simons, as cited in Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). The data collection methods used were pre-post internship surveys using Likert scales, and interviews (Yin, 2014). More specifically, the surveys posed questions about the students' internship expectations and experience, career intentions, and well-being. These will be detailed later in this chapter, but served the purpose of determining (1) if student expectations of the internship were being met and (2) identifying if, and what type of, stimulus events were occurring. The student well-being rating aimed to indicate if internships affected students in this manner. The basic decisions made in choosing to conduct a case study, and the type of case study will now be reviewed.

Savin-Baden and Major (2013) and Yin (1994) note some important decisions to make in case study research. First, the definition of the case is essential when answering the research questions (Yin, 2014). The specific case in this study is stimulus events occurring during student internships, and determining how these events impact the outcomes of career intentions and well-being. Second, in terms of bounding (referring to the boundaries of the case itself), this study focused on students interning in their fourth

year, from one sport management undergraduate program, taking place at Brock University (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013; Yin 2014). Lastly, this is considered a single case study design (Yin, 1994; Yin, 2014). There are two relevant reasons that Yin (2014) provides for doing a single case study. First is the longitudinal nature, and second, the “common” case nature of this study (p.52). This research involved collecting data pre and post-internship, allowing comparison across time periods and the ability to locate any statistical differences in pre and post measures. Therefore, focusing on one case makes sense as the longitudinal component added a comparison element over time. Regarding the “common” aspect, Yin (2014) stated another rationale for using a single case is when studying an everyday type of situation, the single case allows you to attempt to provide insight into a relationship that may exist; in this case, it is between stimulus events and career intentions, as well as well-being. Additionally, this allowed for a more in-depth review of potentially unique or extreme cases – internships rated highly positive or negative – of student internship experiences in a more effective manner due to the delimitation to one site (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013). Expanding on this, more unique or extreme internship experiences were likely to be reported and occur in the sample as more subjects are taken from one site, rather than spreading the sample across multiple sites. Further, Yin (1994) states that single explanatory case designs can contribute significantly to theory building and knowledge in general. Yin (1994) also adds that single explanatory case studies can be beneficial in helping with the refocusing of future investigations. Despite the abundance of existing internship literature, a relationship particularly with stimulus events and well-being, if uncovered, would certainly warrant further investigation as student well-being should be of utmost concern.

**Study Site**

The single site of this study is Brock University as the participants are undergraduate students in their fourth year in Brock's four-year sport management program. Brock University's undergraduate class was an ideal selection as the program has been established for almost 20 years and was recently voted as the fourth best sport management undergraduate course provider in the world (Evans, 2015). Besides the prominence of the program, it is also the largest in Canada with over 600 undergraduate students moving through the degree. The internship placements offered occur in a variety of sport industry sectors (e.g., public, commercial, and non-profit sport) which allowed a broader examination and understanding of the sport management student internship experience. The appeal of this single site study, rather than multiple sites, was to determine what kind of stimulus events are occurring during internships, and how stimulus events affect students in a sport management program, particularly a prominent one such as at Brock University.

**Gaining entry.** In regard to accessing interning students for this study, I contacted the internship coordinator for Brock University's sport management program. The coordinator would be considered the gatekeeper of the study; Neuman and Robson (2012) define this individual as one who controls access to the study's site. By working with the internship coordinator, I was better able to reach the interning students and retrieve a larger study sample. For example, I was able to briefly present my proposed study to the participants in an internship-preparation meeting to recruit participants if they were interested.

### **Participant Selection and Sampling Procedures**

The sample of participants are sport management students at Brock University who opted to do an internship after their third-year courses were completed.

Approximately 70 students do this internship every year between three school terms: fall term which is September to December, winter term which is January to April, and spring term which is May to August. The goal was to have all students who interned in the Fall 2016 and Winter 2017 semesters, which is approximately 35-40 people, complete the study's pre and post-internship survey, which will be detailed later. This is important because as stated, the sport management program at Brock University is the specific boundary of this case within the current study, therefore including another sport management program's students to gain more participants did not serve the purpose of this research.

The aim of sampling all interns in the program was to include men and women in the study. The purpose, as stated in the earlier chapters, is to determine how internship stimulus events impact career intentions and well-being. Despite men and women in Brock's sport management program not being equally proportionate, studying both males and females in this context is important, as both take part in the internship experience yearly.

**Sample.** In total, 28 ( $n = 28$ ) participants completed the pre-internship survey, 23 ( $n = 23$ ) completed the post-internship survey. Therefore, 23 surveys were available for the pre-post survey analysis. Further, of the 23 pre-post surveys, 21 ( $n = 21$ ) resulted in follow-up interviews. For the interviews, nine ( $n = 9$ ) included students interning in the Fall 2016 (September-December) semester, while 12 ( $n = 12$ ) were with students

interning in the Winter 2017 (January-April) semester. Finally, two participants included in the interview sample were Queen Elizabeth (QE) Scholar interns, meaning they interned overseas. Their data was included because the internships themselves remained very similar to internships experienced by the remaining participants, with the exception of some stimulus events described in Chapter 4.

**Compensation.** Participants were offered a \$20 gift card to one of five pre-selected locations approved by Brock's Research Ethics Board. The participants were eligible for the gift card as long as they participated in some manner; they did not have to complete the study in full.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The next important step is to outline the data collection methods. A mixed methods data collection approach was selected which combines both quantitative and qualitative research in a single study (Creswell, 2003). Yin (1994; 2014) notes that case studies can include quantitative data collection, which serves the purpose of answering broader research questions when used in tandem with qualitative data. By using quantitative and qualitative methods within the case study, triangulation can be achieved, which means convergence or validation of results from different approaches (Creswell, 2003; Jick, 1979).

Having provided a general definition of mixed methods in regard to data collection, this explanatory case study more specifically is a sequential explanatory strategy (Creswell, 2003). This definition includes multiple parts: the sequential part of this strategy is due to the data collections occurring at separate times, with the quantitative data being collected first (i.e., the internship surveys and well-being



measures), followed by the qualitative interviews. The explanatory aspect reflects the idea that the qualitative data collected second via interviews is used to provide interpretation or explanation for the quantitative data that was initially collected (Creswell, 2003). The qualitative data consists of one-on-one interviews with the sample of interns after they had completed both the pre and post-internship surveys. As indicated, the interpretation phase was when the multiple quantitative data measures and the qualitative interview data were combined.

The decision to use mixed methods, besides suiting the purpose of the study itself, answers Rudd and Johnson's (2010) call for more mixed methods research in sport management. These authors stated that the use of mixed methods could help provide a better understanding of the phenomenon being studied, and help advance the field of sport management (Rudd and Johnson, 2010). This call had seemingly not been answered as of 2015, and even the poor use of mixed methods had been noted (Abeza, O'Reilly, Dottori, Sequin, & Nzindukiyimana, 2015; van der Roest, Spaaij, & van Bottenburg, 2015). Also, De Lisle noted that: "qualitative dominant mixed methods are best able to capture the complexity of some social and educational issues" (2011, p.95). Specifically related to the context of the internship experience, Abeza et al. (2015) acknowledged that mixed methods are useful for gaining a more complete understanding of real-world, complex situations or contexts. Additionally, this applied to the internships being studied as Odio and Kerwin (2017) noted the complexity of the sport industry in general.

**Quantitative data collection.** As mentioned, this sequential study included multiple quantitative data collection methods for the participants. The first was a pre-post internship survey (see Appendix A and B) that included items based around student

expectations (pre) and experiences (post), career intentions before and after the internship (see Appendix A and B for pre vs. post, as well), as well as student well-being (pre and post; see Appendix C). This served the purpose of looking at the potential importance of expectations entering the internship, and if they were being met. Additionally, the pre-post survey design helped determine changes in students' career intentions and well-being, which was part of the main purpose of this study. Lastly, it served the purpose of providing data to shape the interview guide for students. These surveys were measured on a seven-point Likert scale, with the exception of the well-being measure, which used a six-point Likert scale. The post-internship surveys were completed as close to the internship completion as possible to ensure more accurate ratings from students.

The survey items related to expectations and experiences asked students to rate their expectations going into the internship (pre) regarding different aspects such as (1) quality of supervisor, (2) quality of tasks given, (3) social aspects of the experience, and (4) utility of the internship to meet career objectives. Examples of such survey items are: “your supervisor will be committed to your development and want to work with you”; “you will gain new relevant skills that will be important for moving forward with your career in sport”; and, “you will be given tasks considered important to the organization” (Appendix A). The post-internship survey asked about the same areas, but determined if expectations were met or unmet via past-tense word shifting; for example: “your supervisor *was* committed to your development and *wanted* to work with you” (Appendix B). In the findings section, the Time 1 (T1) survey data is labelled “expectations,” to represent the pre-internship data, while the Time (2) or post-internship data is labelled “experience” around the same factors.

Additionally, survey items were developed based on Cunningham et al.'s (2005) three parts of career intentions: "anticipated career satisfaction, occupational commitment, and intentions to enter the sport management profession" (p. 45). Examples of survey item statements related to career intentions are as follows: "you plan on entering the sport industry once you have completed school"; "you believe a career in the sport industry will be satisfying;" and, "you have a high sense of commitment towards the sport industry" (Appendix A). The career intention items were not worded differently in pre or post versions of the survey, as the purpose was to determine if students' feelings towards a career in the sport industry had shifted after the internship was completed.

The next section of items within the pre-post survey design measured well-being before and after the internship. The measure used was the Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF) which was developed by Keyes, Wissing, Potgieter, Temane, Kruger, and van Rooy (2008). The MHC-SF, while an overall measure of positive mental health, more specifically contains three components of well-being: social well-being, psychological well-being, and emotional well-being (Lamers et al., 2011). Lamers et al. (2011) stated that emotional well-being represents the presence of positive affect or feelings, psychological well-being is represented by "positive functioning in individual life", and social well-being is this positive function, but in "community life" (p. 99). The psychological and social well-being components are based on dimensions that examine how well individuals believe they are doing in life (Lamers et al., 2011). The emotional well-being part is more of a cognitive dimension, as it is the individuals' perception of their life satisfaction, and involves their affect, or feelings and emotions (Lamers et al., 2011).

The MHC-SF itself is a 14-item measure that uses a six-point Likert scale through which participants report how often they experienced particular feelings over the past month (never, once a week, once a month...etc.; Lamers et al., 2011). Items measured begin with the statement “In the past month, how often did you feel...” Example items within each subscale include, happiness and interest in life (emotional well-being), self-acceptance and purpose in life (psychological well-being), and social contribution (social well-being; Lamers et al., p. 104). In testing reliability of the MHC-SF, Lamers et al. (2011) found that the scale had an overall internal reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha) of 0.89, and that the three subscales (emotional, psychological, and social well-being) had reliability scores of 0.83, 0.83, and 0.74, respectively. Although the social well-being reliability level of 0.74 is lower than the other two subscales, Santos (1999) cited Nunnally in stating that traditionally a Cronbach’s Alpha level of 0.7 is the acceptable standard. Besides reliability, Lamers et al. (2011) confirmed the MHC-SF to be a valid instrument while testing for convergent and discriminant validity.

**Qualitative data collection.** Having provided the quantitative data collection method, the qualitative data collection method of this case study will be presented. The interviews were structured to allow for a preset script and for minimal variation in responses for comparison purposes (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Aided questions were used which are specific questions designed to not give respondents much control over the direction of the interview, keeping it focused on the specific topic (see Appendix D). Also, participants were guided back to the relevant questions when necessary to keep the interview on track if they deviated in their responses. Specifically, the questions were focused on stimulus events that occurred during the internship. It is important to note that

the words “shock” and “stimulus event” were not actually used with participants, as it was decided it may intimidate or confuse the individual due to those being more intense terms. Rather, the participants were asked about the internship in general, and led into questions about any occurrences or events that shaped their survey ratings (quantitative data) and opinion of the internship itself. A general example would be if the student rated the internship positively within the post survey experience questions, they were asked what shaped their feelings on considering it a positive experience. An example of an interview script question that aimed to uncover potential stimulus events was: “You say it went [Well/Not so well], can you provide any situations or examples that made you feel this way about the internship?” (Appendix D). Additionally, as mentioned, the focus of the interview probes was on specific stimulus events (e.g., particular interaction with supervisor) that may have impacted the interns and the outcomes of study (career intentions and well-being). Whenever possible, responses were not left at participants identifying overall aspects of the experience (e.g., supervisor in general). An example of an interview script sub-question (probe) used to meet this requirement was: “Can you think of a specific example from your experience related to [INSERT ASPECT]?” (Appendix D). To reiterate, this allowed the researcher to move beyond a general internship factor of influence, and pinpoint the actual stimulus events playing a role in this internship context.

Participants were also asked about their current intention to continue pursuing a sport management career. These interviews aimed to take place within two weeks of the internship completion, depending on availability, but some occurred a few weeks after. Due to the nature of this study aiming to understand stimulus events and the resulting

perceived impact on interns, and this understanding being based on participant recollection, it was important to ensure interviews took place early in relation to the internship's conclusion. To avoid issues, students were informed at the beginning of the study, and during the completion of the post-internship survey, that any participants chosen and who consent to participate must be interviewed shortly after the completion of their experience. The interviews were transcribed verbatim for the purpose of data-analysis, which is described next.

### **Data Analysis**

**Quantitative data.** Due to the sequential explanatory nature of this case study, the quantitative data from the surveys was collected and analyzed first. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, as well as paired sample t-tests to determine if significant differences between pre and post-survey responses existed. Descriptive statistics (mean values and standard deviations) initially provided the basis for determining positive and negative internship experiences, and highlighted areas for probes within the interview guide. Though two participants that completed the surveys did not complete the interview, their quantitative survey data was still used as they did not request to be removed from the study. Paired sample t-tests were completed using SPSS software to determine if the changes in the pre and post-survey data were significant.

**Qualitative data.** Yin (2014) recommended case study analysis serve the purpose of searching for patterns and themes that emerge from the data; this was referred to as a general analytic strategy. It was determined that thematic analysis would adequately fill this role as thematic analysis is defined as identifying and analyzing patterns or themes

(Braun & Clarke, 2006), that DeSantis and Noel Ugarriza state occur throughout one, or across a set of interviews (as cited in Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas, 2013).

Additionally, Vaismoradi et. al., (2013), as well as Braun and Clarke (2006) state that thematic analysis is a useful and accessible means of analysis, particularly for new or early-stage researchers. Lastly, thematic analysis is noted as being useful for situations where low-levels of interpretation are needed. This definition matches the goal of case study analysis set forth by Yin (2014) as discussed previously, and was deemed sufficient.

The thematic data analysis process consisted of basic coding of the interviews. This involved using the codes to find patterns or themes in the data, then grouping, reviewing, and defining those codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Yin, 2014). Microsoft Excel was used for the majority of the coding process, while final themes were grouped and stored in Microsoft Word. This was useful for locating stimulus events, and the frequency of them within participant experiences. This strategy also has the option of chronologically ordering information, so while it was not an expectation, a pattern of stimulus events that developed in terms of timing and when they occur most often, was detectable in some cases (Yin, 2014).

**Integrated interpretation.** After both quantitative and qualitative data sets were analyzed separately, they were integrated for comparison. As noted, the purpose of this stage was to allow the qualitative data from the interviews to help explain the internship experiences and potentially well-being ratings that were identified in the quantitative data. The aim was to uncover if, and how, stimulus events that occurred impacted intern career intentions, and subsequently well-being as a result. Further, as Neuman and Robson (2012) state, the data from both methods of collection will aid in the

interpretation of the other. This was the case as the quantitative data provided probes for the interviews that followed. Regarding the goal of this study, this integration of the data helped explain the role stimulus events play in the internship experience, and their perceived impact on career decision making as well as well-being, and the association between these outcomes. It is important to note that as this was a sequential mixed methods study with the purpose of the qualitative data explaining the quantitative data, there were occurrences where the quantitative and qualitative data slightly contradicted each other. In these situations, the rich qualitative data (i.e., descriptions of the events and the impacts) were used to understand the events further, and classify certain events within the proposed model.

### **Trustworthiness**

There were a number of ways to ensure trustworthiness was maintained in this study. It is worth noting that Yin (2014) takes a more quantitative approach to this by using the terms construct validity, external and internal validity, and reliability. Oppositely, Neuman and Robson (2012) focus on a more qualitative approach to trustworthiness with criteria such as: credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability. The applicable ones will be reviewed, beginning with some general terms from generic methodology texts such as Creswell (2003) and Neuman and Robson (2012). The first approach to trustworthiness, member-checking (falls under the credibility criteria), is the process of confirming with participants that the data from the interviews, and findings reported, matches what they said and is accurate (Creswell, 2003). As Neuman and Robson (2012) note, member-checking is an important technique for ensuring credibility, which is the truth value of the results, and was conducted in this



study. In their review of credibility, Whittemore, Chase, and Mandle (2001) reflect this statement in the importance of the data being an actual reflection of the participants' experiences and meanings; hence the value of member-checking. Member-checking was conducted in this study, with the quotes from participants, and paragraphs discussing these quotes, being emailed to the participants to ensure the researcher understood and did not misinterpret any responses.

An aspect of this study that relates to the notion of dependability, another criteria of trustworthiness, is that it is meant to be structured and more objective in nature; Neuman and Robson (2012) state dependability is essentially the qualitative version of reliability (i.e, the degree to which it is replicable if conducted in the same manner). The surveys revealed and helped determine potential outcomes and areas worth exploring (where stimulus events impacted the study outcomes), while the interviews gathered more in-depth data around the participants' view of the impact of the stimulus events. To reiterate, the dependability aspect is the ability for the study to be replicated under similar conditions and have consistent results (Neuman & Robson, 2012). The study was designed in a manner that would make it easier to replicate due to formatted surveys, a validated well-being measure, and an interview script, all of which were used to have minimal deviation. However, it is important to note that student experiences and interpretations of the internship experience itself were varied, as what one individual finds positive, may make another uncomfortable; the internship context proved to be quite complex. This means that while stimulus events may be common and observable in other studies of similar conditions, the reporting and interpretation of these stimulus events could be different with other studies and participants. Yin (2014) states though that

in case study research, the notion of reliability, or dependability as outlined above, more so refers to being able to do the same case over again, rather than replicating the specific results. Therefore, the main purpose was to minimize the study's errors and biases (Yin, 2014). Having stated that, Yin (2014) notes the researcher should document thoroughly enough that if being audited, the procedures are clear enough to repeat and, in principle, ideally achieve the same results. The primary focus is a clearly outlined research path for others to follow.

Another important criteria of trustworthiness is confirmability, which Neuman and Robson (2012) state is determining the extent of neutrality of the research, or not allowing bias to shape the results. As stated in the positionality section, this research stemmed from a desire to study the negative occurrences within internships, and therefore it brings up questions of researcher bias. Researcher bias is explained by Johnson (1997) as a researcher finding what they want to find in the research, and the study reflecting this. In other words, there would be concern that this study would focus solely on negative cases and look for negative results in the data. This issue has been prevented by studying the perceived impact of stimulus events on both career intentions and well-being, in general; not just negative occurrences. This study in turn contributes to our theoretical knowledge around the comprehensive impact (positive and negative) of internship expectations and experiences on relevant career-related and affective outcomes.

Yin (2014), in defining construct validity, refers to it as ensuring your study is measuring what it intended to study in the first place; if there are any outside variables that your study cannot account for, or shortcomings in general, they must be

acknowledged and discussed as to how they are not biasing the study. In this case study, construct validity was assessed via the main form of triangulation incorporated into this study that Patton (as cited in Yin, 2014) states is method triangulation, which involves using multiple methods. This is valuable as one of the benefits of case study research and the use of mixed methods, is using multiple sources of evidence to provide a more accurate and convincing understanding of the case (Yin, 2014).

### **Ethical Considerations**

Yin (2014) minimally discusses the ethical aspects of case studies, as they must be formally approved. Although this study was approved by the Research Ethics Board (REB), some important ethical considerations should be discussed. As part of this submission and as Yin (2014) states, informed consent was received from every participant involved in the study and they were made aware of important details such as: purpose and outline of study procedures, their freedom to withdraw at any point, voluntary consent to participate, their right to privacy and access the study, and any benefits or risks associated with them partaking in the study (Creswell, 2003). Regarding risks, the interviews were mostly based around significant occurrences for sport management students who were interning. While both positive and negative cases were reviewed, the negative events were important to note in this section. The interview gave the participant the opportunity to discuss events that occurred that they viewed negatively, and therefore could, and did at times, have comments that were not favourable towards the organization where the participant interned. To protect all participants, pseudonyms (participant #'s) were used for participants to enhance confidentiality, and organizations were not named. In turn, the participants were reminded of this to ensure

they were comfortable providing details about their experiences without fear of repercussions. The sport industry is one where employers place heavy emphasis on networking and references, and Kornspan and Duve's (2013) research found numerous studies emphasizing this importance. Therefore, a participant could fear losing potential connections by making unfavourable comments about the organization in some manner without confidentiality. The pseudonyms of the participants were accessible by myself only and stored on a locked computer, similar to the data collected. While anonymity could not be provided, these methods enhanced suitable privacy and confidentiality as recommended by Yin (2014). As for the stored data, it will be kept for two years, after which it will be destroyed to prevent future use. Lastly, in relation to the negative occurrences students reported (internal or external to internship), there was a possibility that a traumatic issue could come up in the interview. In preparation, the contact information for local locations to contact and visit was provided to the participant, if such issues arose. Examples of such locations included, but were not limited to: health services, counselling services, and the local ombudsperson on campus.

Another area to cover involving the role of the researcher is the nature of the research in relation to myself. The positionality section detailed the study's background, and an ethical consideration to note is that I attend the same school as the participants, and am in the same program. Further, I had Teaching Assistant (TA) responsibilities for a third-year sport management course that involved interacting with a few of the students who were involved in this study. This qualifies as "backyard" research, which Creswell (2003) defines as when the participants and researcher have a connection, which in this

case is my own institution. All attempts were made to ensure the participants knew their rights and ability to remove themselves, at any time, without penalty.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

As noted in Chapter 3, while 28 ( $n = 28$ ) participants completed the pre-internship survey, 23 ( $n = 23$ ) completed the post-internship survey. Therefore, 23 surveys were available for the pre-post survey analysis, and are discussed first. Further, of the 23 pre-post surveys, 21 ( $n = 21$ ) resulted in follow-up interviews. For the interviews, nine ( $n = 9$ ) included students interning in the Fall 2016 (September-December) semester, while 12 ( $n = 12$ ) were with students interning in the Winter 2017 (January-April) semester. Finally, of these 21 interview participants, eight were females, and 13 were males. The sample breakdown is in Table 2 below.

<b>P#</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Industry Sector of Internship</b>
1	Female	Public
2	Female	Non-profit
3*	Male	Commercial
4	Male	Commercial
5	Male	Commercial
6	Female	Commercial
7	Female	Commercial
8	Male	Commercial
9	Female	Commercial
10	Male	Commercial
12*	Male	Non-profit
13	Male	Commercial
15	Male	Commercial
16	Female	Non-profit
17	Female	Non-profit – QE Scholar
19	Male	Commercial
20	Male	Commercial
21	Female	Commercial
22	Male	Public
23	Male	Non-profit – QE Scholar
24	Male	Commercial
26	Male	Commercial
28	Male	Commercial

*Table 2.* Sample Breakdown: completed both surveys (\* = no interview completed); omitted participant numbers = no post-survey data collected.

**Quantitative Data: Surveys**

The following section outlines the results from the pre-post surveys that were collected from 23 participants. First, the reliability scores from the pre-post measures are outlined, then the mean score differences and paired t-test scores from the pre-post measures are presented.

Reliability scores were calculated via Cronbach's alpha statistics for pre-survey expectations supervisor ( $\alpha = .69$ ), expectations task ( $\alpha = .62$ ), expectations social ( $\alpha = .70$ ), expectations internship utility ( $\alpha = .78$ ), well-being emotional ( $\alpha = .85$ ), well-being psychological ( $\alpha = .85$ ), well-being social ( $\alpha = .77$ ), and career intentions ( $\alpha = .71$ ). Further, Cronbach's alpha statistics were calculated for post-survey expectations supervisor ( $\alpha = .91$ ), expectations task ( $\alpha = .61$ ), expectations social ( $\alpha = .89$ ), expectations internship utility ( $\alpha = .91$ ), well-being emotional ( $\alpha = .86$ ), well-being psychological ( $\alpha = .92$ ), well-being social ( $\alpha = .86$ ), and career intentions ( $\alpha = .87$ ).

It is important to note that three of the mentioned factors (i.e., expectations supervisor [pre], and expectations-experience task [pre and post]) fell below the recommended standard ( $\alpha = .70$ ) discussed by Santos (1999). When exploring the items within the factor expectations supervisor, it appears that all three items within this factor may have lacked consistency within responses. This may have been due to lack of communication regarding what to expect from a supervisor within an internship, thus the perception is based solely on the individual prior to the internship. When exploring the items related to expectations task, it appears that the most problematic item was "designated pointless tasks as main job". Given that all other items were positively

worded, there seems to be a lack of consistency in these participants rating the expectation and experience of pointless tasks.

While the lower reliability scores were not above the standard (Santos, 1999) in the cases noted, inconsistency was simply noted and reflected on. The items were kept for analysis as the purpose of the quantitative data was to compliment and highlight areas of discussion for the interviews.

Once the reliability scores were calculated and items were collapsed into the factors of pre-post expectations/experience, career intentions, and well-being, mean scores were then examined to identify differences in pre-post scores. In short, the survey data helped the researcher identify where the internship exceeded expectations or fell short. Additionally, the survey data helped the researcher identify if participant career intentions or well-being shifted following the internship experience.

As shown in Table 3, the pre-post mean scores and standard deviations for each factor highlight where marginal change occurred. To clarify, in terms of the expectations-experience factors and section of the survey, the T1 factors are labelled “expectations” because they were measured pre-internship. The T2 data represent the same factors, but are labelled “experience” because they were measured post-internship. Notably, with the expectations supervisor pre-survey ( $M = 5.91$ ,  $SD = .63$ ), the participants seemingly had similar, higher expectations for the role their supervisor would play. However, after completion of the internship, not only did the supervisor ratings typically drop ( $M = 5.54$ ), but also the high standard deviation ( $SD = 1.59$ ) indicates variation in supervisor ratings, and therefore experiences. As will be discussed in the qualitative findings, this is explained by some of the varied experiences reported by participants.



Additionally, the increase from pre to post on the expectations task and expectations social factor mean scores point towards exceeded expectations (on average) in these areas. Interestingly, the experience internship utility, or the degree to which participants believe this experience would benefit them moving forward, saw the largest change from pre ( $M = 6.39$ ,  $SD = .59$ ) to post ( $M = 5.82$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ).

Of the well-being factors, well-being emotional decreased slightly from pre ( $M = 5$ ,  $SD = .73$ ) to post ( $M = 4.95$ ,  $SD = .79$ ), while well-being psychological was a minimal change pre ( $M = 4.71$ ,  $SD = .92$ ) to post ( $M = 4.82$ ,  $SD = .96$ ). Notably, well-being social increased from pre ( $M = 3.92$ ,  $SD = .86$ ) to post ( $M = 4.26$ ,  $SD = .94$ ), and this matches the increase in the expectations/experience social factor that participants reported, indicating the social aspects of the internship exceeded expectations (pre- $M = 5.43$ ,  $SD = .83$ , post- $M = 5.74$ ,  $SD = 1.39$ ).

<b>Factor – T1</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>T2</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Expectations & Experience: <b>Supervisor</b>	5.91	.63		5.54	1.59
Expectations & Experiences: <b>Tasks</b>	5.33	.96		5.55	1.06
Expectations & Experience: <b>Social</b>	5.43	.83		5.74	1.39
Expectations & Experience: <b>Internship Utility</b>	6.39	.59		5.82	1.20
Well-Being: <b>Emotional</b>	5	.73		4.95	.79
Well-Being: <b>Psychological</b>	4.71	.92		4.82	.96
Well-Being: <b>Social</b>	3.92	.86		4.26	.94
<b>Career Intentions</b>	5.89	.64		5.59	1.04

Table 3. Factor Descriptive Statistics from Pre-to Post-Internship

Finally, the average career intentions ratings slightly decreased from pre ( $M = 5.89$ ) to post ( $M = 5.59$ ) internship. The standard deviation ( $SD = 1.04$ ) is notable,

indicating that high variation was present in the result, particularly in relation to the lower T1 standard deviation (SD = .64). This was explored in the qualitative findings.

A paired samples t-test was run using SPSS on the survey data to determine if the changes noted were significant. The results of the t-tests are displayed in Tables 4, 5, and 6, below and on page 89. The notable findings from the paired samples t-test were that the changes from pre-to post were statistically significant for experience internship utility ( $p = 0.011$ , Table 4) and well-being social ( $p = 0.003$ , Table 6). It is important to note that the changes in the well-being social factor were particularly interesting given that the interview data indicated the social context of the internship played an important role in the internship experience and impact. This is further reviewed in the qualitative findings and discussion sections.

	Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Expectations_Supervisor_T1 - Experience_Supervisor_T2	.37681	1.56445	.32621	- .29971	1.05333	1.155	22	.260
Pair 2 Expectations_Tasks_T1 - Experience_Tasks_T2	- .21739	1.03284	.21536	- .66402	.22924	- 1.009	22	.324
Pair 3 Expectations_Social_T1 - Experience_Social_T2	- .30435	1.25091	.26083	- .84528	.23659	- 1.167	22	.256
Pair 4 Expectations_Int_Utility_T1 - Experience_Int_Utility_T2	.57391	.99326	.20711	.14440	1.00343	2.771	22	.011*

Table 4. Expectations-Experience Paired Sample T-Test.

In general, the quantitative data was valuable as it helped pinpoint where stimulus events may have been occurring for the participants. This survey data was invaluable as a

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Car_Int_T1 - Car_Int_T2	.29891	.96805	.20185	-.11971	.71753	1.481	22	.153

Table 5. Career Intentions Paired Sample T-Test.

means to help construct and identify key talking points in the interview protocol. For example, as seen in question 2 of the interview guide (Appendix D), changes from the pre-post career intentions section of the survey were input directly into the interview and each participant was asked to elaborate or explain them. The complexity of the internship context made the mixed methods design crucial in developing an understanding of what events were occurring, and the extent of the impact each event had on the outcomes of study (career intentions and well-being). The next section will outline the findings of the qualitative data.

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	EmotionalWB_T1 - EmotionalWB_T2	.04545	.49650	.10585	- .17468	.26559	.429	21	.672
Pair 2	PsychologicalWB_T1 - PsychologicalWB_T2	- .10606	.60759	.12954	- .37545	.16333	-.819	21	.422
Pair 3	SocialWB_T1 – SocialWB_T2	- .33636	.46347	.09881	- .54186	-.13087	- 3.404	21	.003*

Table 6. Well-Being Paired Sample T-Test.

### Qualitative Data: Interviews

Of the 21 interview participants, eight were females and 13 were males. During

these interviews, there were a total of 84 internal (within the internship) stimulus events reported, which will be discussed next (see a summary in Table 7).

<b>Stimulus Event Impact on Career Intentions</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Supervisor</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Environment</b>	<b>Career</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
Positive Small	3	1	1	1	0	0	6
Positive Medium	6	2	4	1	1	0	14
Positive Large	28	9	9	3	4	0	51
Negative Small	5	5	0	0	0	0	10
Negative Medium	2	4	1	2	0	0	9
Negative Large	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Neutral	1	2	2	1	0	1	7

*Table 7.* Stimulus events by category.

For context again, the scale used by participants to rate the size of the impact of these events ranged from -10 to +10 on career intentions and well-being (see Appendix G). These events will be presented next and are categorized by the impact they had on career intentions, and if they were rated as being negative or positive; a neutral impact did occur in a few instances and will be discussed as well. Any stimulus events with an impact of 1-3 are considered “small positive”, 4-6 is “medium positive”, and any events that were rated as 7-10 were considered “large positive” stimulus events. Oppositely, stimulus events with an impact of -1 to -3 were considered “small negative”, -4 to -6 was “medium negative”, and any events that were rated as -7 to -10 were considered “large negative” stimulus events. Additionally, these stimulus events were categorized (coded by the researcher) by what aspect of the internship they were related to, such as: task (work given to intern), social (interactions with employees or others involved with the organization), supervisor (commitment to intern’s development), career (relevant to career or participant’s future opportunities), and environment (of the organization). It is important to note that some stimulus events are grouped under more than one category

(one event could be both task and career-related, for example). Lastly, these events are discussed in relation to the model proposed in Chapter 1 (Figure 1). This model states that stimulus events occur during internships and are classified as positive or negative, which in turn, has either a small, negative, or large impact on student career intentions. Further, the impact of changes in student career intentions would then impact well-being.

**Stimulus events positive.** As seen in Figure 2, of the 84 stimulus events reported by participants, 59 were rated as having a positive impact on the participants' career intentions. These stimulus events that had a positive impact on career intentions are described in the following section by the size of the impact they had, as broken down previously (small, medium, large impact), starting with small events.

***Positive small.*** Participants reported six small positive stimulus events which were related to either social, supervisor, or environmental aspects of the internship. Two of these stimulus events were task-related, where one student (P#19) was given additional responsibility due to their more extensive work background than other interns, and the second example involved a student (P#5) who was required to also work outside their department (sponsorship) and help sell tickets. These two events were seen as positive towards the participants' careers in small ways, such as being extra work experience to take moving forward (P#5), and being given more responsibility as a whole, which the intern desired (P#19). However, the lower ratings came from these events being stressful or frustrating at the time. For example, P#5 was an intern in the sponsorship department and wanted to stay within the sponsorship side of the organization, as the intern stated, "That's where my interest was and that's where I wanted to learn..." The participant went on to suggest that ticket sales was not as appealing; though they noted not being picky

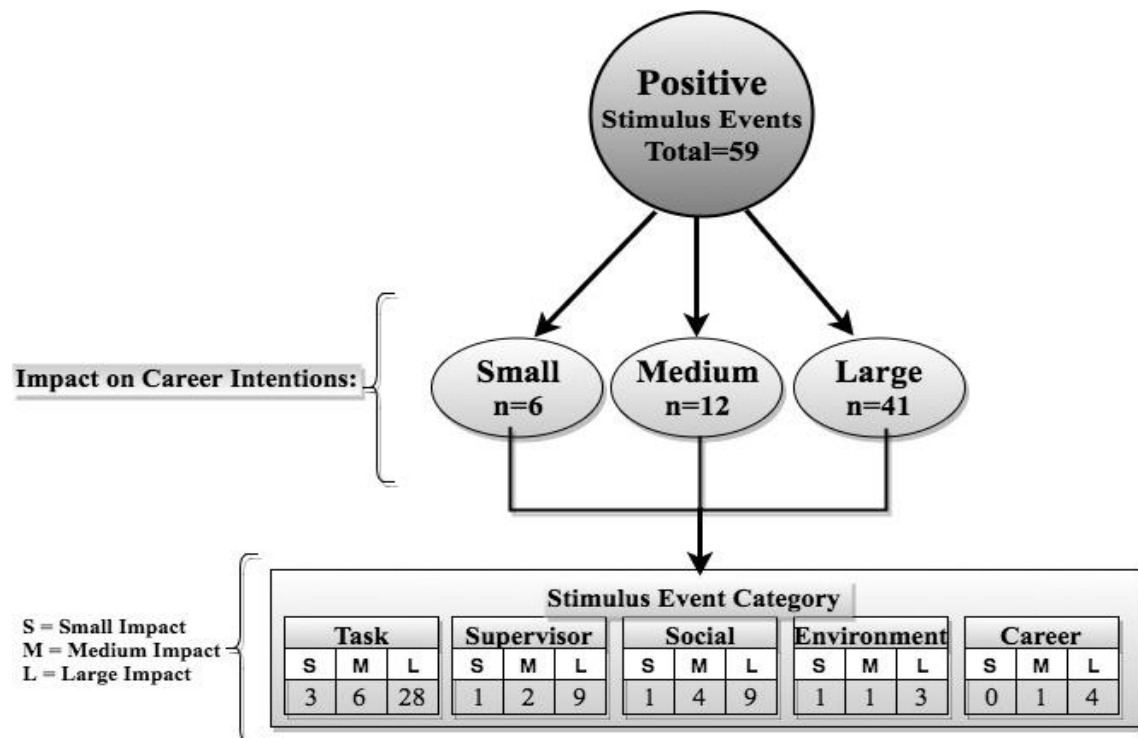


Figure 2. Distribution of positive stimulus events by category and size of impact.

and willing to work in ticket sales as an entry level job to get into the industry. This is where the small positive impact on career intentions occurs, in that the experience was still viewed as positive moving forward.

Similarly, P#19 highlighted the desire to have a lot of responsibility, but was then overwhelmed by how busy the internship cycle actually was. For instance, the participant stated, "...at the time, when it was going on it was definitely a negative because I was stressed out, and I'm working through my lunch, and you know, I'm staying late, coming in early..." Similar to P#5, this was an example of how a small positive impact on career intentions (e.g., being given responsibility) was also viewed as having a negative impact on well-being.

***Positive medium.*** There were twelve medium-sized positive stimulus events that were reported by participants. Of these, six were task-related events, four were social, two were related to the intern's supervisor, one was organization-related, and one career – two events fell under two categories. Two of these events involved employees at the organization being supportive as well as including the intern, meaning the participants felt welcomed within the organization. For example, P#8 discussed how important this welcoming atmosphere was at the beginning of the internship to make him more comfortable. Specifically, he stated, “I was happy, excited, and it made me eager to come back to work knowing I’m welcomed.” These social stimulus events exemplified how important fostering a positive work environment was to the interns’ success and experience.

The other event was both social and task-related, which involved a female participant who was tasked with visiting schools and, with the assistance of teachers, conducting sport programming and classes. While a number of the teachers would take the opportunity to focus on their own work instead of helping her, the biggest influence was one of the teachers that would support her in coaching her class. She stated, “...one of the teachers was there for almost every session with me. He used to be in the military, so he helped me out a lot with the kids, especially because his classes were very large in size” (P#17). Further, the teacher helped instill confidence in her to approach the other teachers that were not helping out like they were supposed to. From this, the participant gained teaching experience, learned how to control classes better, and built her confidence.

Conversely, four of these stimulus events while rated as having a positive influence on career intentions in general, were based around lessons learned, and two were even stressful events at the time. One task-related example of this involved an intern responsible for running an event for a big sponsor, and being the main point of contact with the sponsor representatives. The event went well, proved that the intern could run such an event, and they received quite a few compliments from the sponsor, as well as the employees within the intern's organization. Despite initially sounding like a large positive event, the impact was lower (medium-sized instead) as a result of the intern not wanting to pursue this type of job in sport in the future. It was still a valuable stimulus event due to the student gaining some confidence in the industry, and having the internship solidify that as he states, "what I learned in school was indeed going to be enough to actually use it in real life" (P#28). This was an example of where the internship gave the student some perspective on their career moving forward; they may not necessarily have found what they wanted to pursue, but it helped eliminate some options.

Two of the other stimulus events that had a medium impact on career intentions were task and supervisor-related. The first involved some confusion and issues with parents around a children's program the intern was running (P#23), and the second event involved issues with the intern's supervisor, and how poorly run the facility was as a result (P#7). The medium career intentions impact comes from the students turning the negative occurrences into learning opportunities. Both participants mentioned taking lessons out of these experiences, with the first intern being forced to learn to adapt and change due to the program issues, which they stated gave them valuable experience moving forward. The second participant (P#7), while having a very ineffective supervisor



and negative internship with them, tried to view the situation in a positive manner, and take as many lessons out of their experience as possible; in this case, the participant recognized “how not to run a facility”, and the value of having specific policies in place (something the manager did not).

Two of the last stimulus events in this category were from the same participant (P#5), and were both task-related. One event involved the intern being given autonomy over a clinic, and was trusted with reaching out to organizations to participate in this clinic. The second event stemmed from the intern being trusted to give input during meetings with management, and it being valued by the staff. These events were important to career intentions as the intern was given trust by the organization to complete valuable tasks. Additionally, these events made the intern feel valued as a result of this trust, and being able to have a voice in the internship; they made the participant feel like more than an intern. Lastly, they were both useful experiences for the intern to carry forward.

***Positive large.*** Of the 84 stimulus events, and 59 of which were positive, 41 of them were reported as having a large positive impact on career intentions. Therefore, half of the notable occurrences were very influential for students in a positive way, and is a good sign for interns. In terms of frequent categories for these events, twenty-six of the events were task-related, nine were supervisor-related, and eight were related to social aspects of the internship. To break up the presentation of these events, the themes will be discussed in order of magnitude (i.e., +7 events first, then +8 events...and so on), with the exception of three events at the end of this subsection.

Seven of the forty large positive stimulus events were rated by participants as having an impact of +7 on career intentions, and further, all seven were task-related

stimulus events. Of these seven, three were events that involved interns being given a lot responsibility at events, either running it themselves, or organizing it; regardless, they had a large role in the event itself. The first was a female participant (P#16) who was the main point of contact and a site-supervisor at a large kid's sporting tournament, and was responsible for overseeing all of the volunteers at the event. The second involved a participant (P#15) who organized a bowling event for kids in the community, which went very well, but unfortunately, they did not get to be present the day of the event due to some external circumstances. This participant noted that the event would have been more impactful had they actually been on-site and seen the event run successfully in person.

Two of the other events in this category simply consisted of interns being given more responsibility at events that turned into valuable experiences moving forward, especially because they enjoyed the work they were given. One of these other task-related events revolved around the intern's supervisor (P#26), which involved the student coming up with a final project idea on their own, and then afterwards, receiving positive feedback and immediate approval on it. This event was positive as it was a relief for the intern to be given autonomy on the project, receive positive feedback on the first attempt from his supervisor, and see that he could manage the task given.

One of the last stimulus events that was rated a +7 was unique in that it was for an event that was a negative occurrence at the time, but ended up resulting in a positive experience (P#13). There was an issue around an athlete not having their jersey for an away game, which the intern alone was responsible for as they were on the coaching staff, but they had packed an extra jersey for the team in case something like this happened. As a result, when the intern found out the player did not have their jersey, it

was stressful because it was his job to ensure this did not happen and he feared he would lose his position. However, in the end the intern's supervisor commended him for planning ahead and packing an extra jersey. This comment highlighted his thoroughness, as well as impacted his career intentions in terms of confidence entering the industry.

This impact is emphasized in the following,

It's a major impact, it helps me and gives me confidence that I'm doing my job to a high capability, because that's attention to detail. That's paying attention, understanding that things happen and I might make a mistake, but at least I have a back-up plan just in case, so nobody has to worry. It allows me to strive to always go above and beyond as far as preparation and attention to detail. (P#13)

Again, this helped instill confidence that he could succeed in the sport industry, but did not necessarily impact his specific career intentions in terms of where exactly he wants to work. While all seven of these were valuable experiences for the interns, and certainly had a large impact, it becomes noticeable how they differ from the larger (+10 ratings) task related events in terms of the influence they have on students; this is discussed later.

Moving into the large positive stimulus events that were rated as having a +8 on Career Intentions (17 total), six of them were supervisor-related. Of these six, four involved the intern being included as well as valued, and also being given more responsibility; a common theme of the positive events. One participant (P#6) overall had more of a negative experience during the internship, and had multiple supervisors. However, one of P#6's supervisors was much more inclusive and trusting in terms of giving more responsibility, and ensuring the intern had chances to gain valuable experience at events, particularly in relation to the other supervisors at the organization.

This participant accounted for two of these large positive +8 stimulus events, and they were both around the responsibility that was given, especially for an intern. In relation to the inclusion and feeling of being valued, P#2 was a great example of how important this was, as she noted all of the higher-ups at her organization knew her by name and valued her input at meetings or in the office in general. As a result, this not only had a large impact on her wanting to pursue a career in the same umbrella organization she was interning for, but it had a large impact on her day-to-day well-being, again, as she felt valued by these prominent individuals in the sport industry. This aspect of being recognized by individuals in the sport industry itself played a bigger role. She stated,

Knowing that the work I was doing was being recognized, and wasn't a recognition just coming from my classmates, it was recognition coming from people who have established themselves in a huge organization. So, I think that's definitely why I would rate that, that high. (P#2)

Beyond being recognized, feeling valued and included played a large role in general on career intentions ratings. Two events from the same participant (P#20) related to the internship environment as well as supervisor and the employees, both of which were given +8's in terms of the career intentions impact, simply involved the staff giving the intern positive feedback and support throughout the internship. One of these events was directed towards the feedback received to reinforce the positive work the intern was doing, while the other event was around developing a valuable learning experience for the participant. Specifically, he stated:

When I would make mistakes, it was never a batted eye. It was always a learning experience and a great experience for me because they provided that, and they

would also go beyond that. It was always for the betterment of me as an individual learning. (P#20)

To reiterate, receiving positive feedback in general throughout the experience was quite valuable to some of these interns. Two other events involved a positive environment as well at the organization in terms of the reinforcement the intern (P#26) received from coworkers, and the second involved a social sport league that people from the community and the organization took part in (QE Scholar – P#17). While P#17's event is slightly different due to the context of the internship being overseas with the intern living in this community for four months, the social component was common through a number of the other participant internship experiences. These were examples where something as simple as getting along well with coworkers and the support they could provide played a large role for some interns. P#8 supported this as one event of note for him was simply being involved in social activities with members of the organization such as meals, particularly after work hours, as it helped the intern fit in with the group and connect with them more.

One last example of the value of inclusion, but less related to the social side of the internship, was a supervisor including the intern in meetings and conference calls that the intern set up from their own "leads". P#24 found that his own sales lead resulted in a conference call (which P#24 was included in) and potential deal between the internship organization and a league in another province, and even led to his boss flying out to meet with league representatives. This experience made the intern feel like an actual employee, and being allowed to be a part of the whole process – something that a number of interns at different organizations felt they were excluded from – was influential in terms of career intentions. Part of this comes from building confidence as a result, as he noted: "It

definitely impacted my confidence, I was more confident after I started to get warmer leads, and it definitely impacted my performance” (P#24).

Six of the remaining stimulus events rated as having a +8 impact on career intentions were all task-related. The first was similar to previous themes around being given more responsibility in general, as the intern had to build trust with the staff and supervisor in order for them to gradually give him more work (P#20). This participant stated that it was a good feeling that trust was built, but it started off with a lot of mundane tasks that were boring, and not what the intern had hoped for; he proved himself though and gained valuable experience by the end. The other five of these positive task-related stimulus events were similar in that while they also involved the interns being given more responsibility, the work given was notably meaningful and clearly of value to the organization. Two examples were both from P#9 who was working on media sets with large clients, and even saw some of her own work on TV, making it memorable. A positive that she took from this was more confidence in terms of being able to handle the responsibility she was given, and being able to take on more in the future as a result of this work going well. However, the difference between the two events, though similar, was one involved some communication issues and frustration with one of the organization’s clients, which added some stress to the position at times.

The remaining three events in this category were all related to both meaningful work for the organization, and gaining valuable experience that either was related to what they wanted to do in the future, or would at least help them in general moving forward in their career. The first was a lengthy report on the status of a particular sport for the country the intern was working in (QE Scholar - P#23), and how to best proceed with

developing it moving forward. He stated that being given this responsibility and seeing a different side of sport: "...really confirmed that this is something I wanted to do. It really showed me that I was right, and that yes, this is something I can really see myself continuing to do" (P#23). This event served as an opportunity to solidify the participant's career intentions moving forward. Similarly, another participant found that running tryouts with 1000's of participants, and doing so in a supervisory role, really helped prove that he could succeed as a manager, and built confidence in himself moving forward. He stated,

Sport management, that's trying to work as a manager in sport, and because I practiced that in an actual environment, in a practical setting, it reinforced that I could do it. Whatever doubts that I had before, they're gone now because of that experience. (P#10)

This also reinforced the importance of supervisors trusting the interns with more responsibility and meaningful work, as it gives them invaluable experience that will benefit them in the future.

The last +8 task-related stimulus event involved an intern gaining experience writing proposals for potential clients (teams), and therefore learning how to sell both the proposal and himself as well (P#24). He found that the opportunity to practice selling to other teams would benefit him moving forward in business, as he noted he had more interest in that industry; regardless, it was still a valuable event and experience that he gained benefits from.

There were seven large stimulus events that were given a rating of +9, five of which were task-related, two supervisor-related, two career-related, and one was social-

related. Of these seven events, four were related in that they involved supervisors showing commitment to their intern's development, and/or recognizing work the intern had done. P#2 was essentially told she would be cold-calling to develop the skill and gain experience for future use. This gave her an opportunity to also gain confidence for future jobs, when she said:

Being thrown into something that I was not comfortable with before, and knowing that I can do it definitely had an impact. If there was a job that came up where that was involved, I wouldn't be hesitant to apply. (P#2)

The next event that ties in with this committed supervisor theme occurred with P#9, where her supervisor was promoting her and the work she had done, to other employees within the organization. This resulted in employees introducing themselves to her and asking her to work on other projects with them. Further, this extra effort on the supervisor's behalf opened up new opportunities for the intern, provided different work and skill development experiences, and facilitated networking prospects as well as contacts for the future. The other two events that involved the committed supervisor were from the same intern. P#1 first was tasked with running an important tour for the leading sponsor of a multisport event, and doing so alone while her supervisor was away. She did a great job and was praised by not only her supervisor, but the sponsor representatives too. The second event was partially a result of this first event, as she after the completion of her internship was asked to stay on the committee she was involved with at the intern organization. Worth noting is that this was particularly impressive as the other members of the committee all voted to have her stay. Further, and what made it memorable for her, was that these were all experienced individuals in this sector of the sport industry that



were happy with her contribution to both the committee and organization's efforts to host the large event; this was similar to P#2's point about recognition from experienced industry members. This leads to a theme with some of the remaining +9 rated events, that of the influential nature of the intern's work having an impact on the organization, or interns seeing the results of their efforts.

Two of the remaining three events rated +9 involved interns contributing to their organization, and seeing the result of their successful work. The first event, experienced by P#28, occurred when the manager of the organization was looking for ideas for a team theme for an important part of the team's season. At the time, the other staff members were offering ideas, and when the intern provided an option, most of the staff said it likely was not a great choice. However, he brought it up again in front of the manager, and the manager not only liked it, but approved it and the team used it that season. Not only did it prove his creative ability, he found in terms of career intentions it also had a large impact when he stated, "It made me think that I can actually go into a sport organization and make a very positive difference. It really excited me" (P#28). Similarly, P#2 was tasked with helping plan and organize a community event, as well as reach out to local community members (professional athletes and an artist) to come speak to the underprivileged kids that the event was being run for. The event was not only a success logistically, but seeing the resulting impact the event had on the program's participants was what stuck out for her and showed her the true value of the work she was doing as she was having an impact on their lives. She noted this meaningful work made her want to come into work every day, "It was like their heroes coming in. I could tell a difference in their attitudes, and it was big for me knowing that I had a part in planning and

organizing it” (P#2). These were examples of why giving interns more responsibility can be so beneficial, as not only did it benefit the organizations, but the interns also received career and personal benefits.

The final event that was rated as having a +9 impact on career intentions was both task and career-related. This stimulus event revolved around the major annual event P#20 helped organize and run, and how he did not know what to expect in terms of how much he would enjoy working in this sector. The lead up and event itself went well, and he had such an amazing experience throughout that it solidified what he wanted to do with his career moving forward. He explained that:

Being at the finish line and seeing everyone's faces and seeing how happy everyone was with their personal results, and everyone thanking me for all the hard work we'd done, it was such a rewarding experience. I didn't really know what to expect going into that week, and it was over-the-top amazing. (P#20)

Further, he also stated in regard to working in the events sector: “Starting my career, it's something I really want to do, it is very satisfying” (P#20). In comparison to some of the positive stimulus events that were rated lower, it became clear how influential and impactful these higher rated events are on the interns and their career intentions.

The remaining positively rated stimulus events were graded as having +10 on career intentions; there were 10 of these, two of which are discussed on pages 109-110 detailing three large positive events where the career intentions and well-being ratings were not similarly rated. The +10 stimulus events were all classified as task or social-related; with one also being career-related and another supervisor-related. All of these +10 events were quite significant in some form, whether it is from the impact they had on

the student personally, on their career, or how successfully a task went and the pride that comes with that. The first task-related +10 stimulus event that also fell under the supervisor category involved the intern (P#26) completing a challenging research project for the firm (an athlete agency), and when the supervisor travelled to another country and was talking to scouts, he showed them the research that P#26 had completed; the scouts were impressed by it. Hearing this from his boss, even though he did not ask his supervisor to show his research to anyone, gave him the motivation to keep putting in the level of work that he was, and reinforced that he could succeed in the industry.

Another example of a stimulus event involving a challenging task was described by P#2 where she was tasked with helping plan a community event that was not expected to do very well in terms of money raised and attendance numbers, with little time beforehand to prepare. Two key aspects of why this was such a significant event are that firstly, she played a large role in bringing in sponsorships and donations through the use of her own personal network. Additionally, the low expectations component made it more rewarding, as she stated: “Being a part of something that so many people had doubts that it [would] work out the way we saw, then it worked out better, was big” (P#2), and this influenced her career intentions in a positive way.

The final three task-related stimulus events rated +10 involved challenging work or the intern going above and beyond in terms of the job they did. For the first of the three, the event consisted of P#9 doing research on her own during her spare time and proposing ideas to the internship organization representatives for them to pitch to two large corporate partners. Not only did her supervisors like one of her ideas, they used it and actually gave her credit instead of telling the partner organizations it was their own.

She also received great feedback on the idea, and knowing that she contributed, was recognized for it, and they used her idea, made her feel really good. The second event in this category, which was experienced by P#10, revolved around the job expectation of dealing with a group of coaches in the office, and meant managing a challenging group of personalities. Further, he noted that previous interns had apparently not been able to do so very well when trying to work with the coaches, yet he managed it successfully and confidently. As well, he stated that he was a bit shy by nature, but was able to progress and handle this task confidently and show assertiveness, especially due to his previous experience with the sport he was working in. He also found that it gave him valuable experience moving forward and that managing this task successfully made him more confident and his desire to enter sport increased as a result. He commented on this: “That will carry over into the future because when I’m speaking with higher end guys like bosses and supervisors, I won’t have a problem with it” (P#10).

The final task-related stimulus event in this category was reported by P#15, who was tasked with organizing a skating event for kids with the athletes from the team he worked for. The most notable aspect of this event was that one of the kids had a health condition and was in a wheelchair, so he had to figure out and organize how to get the child on the ice. He managed to do so successfully and stated that it was an amazing moment for him seeing this work out. He found that witnessing all of the kids smiling, and the thank-you letters received afterwards, really made the work worth it. In turn, this influenced his career intentions as the community side of sport was something he was already considering getting into, and this helped solidify it more.

Two additional aspects were also worth mentioning, first that he was tasked with organizing and running two different events, and both went well, but this event was rated higher in terms of the impact it had on him. He notably stated that this was because he was actually present for this event (this will be discussed further in the discussion section) versus the first event he organized that he missed due to external circumstances. Interns being present and seeing the results of their own work is a seemingly important part of the internship experience. Second, the intern noted that he was used to working for his father most of his life, and so he rarely was put in charge of organizing events. Rather, he was expected to follow instructions and did not have experience with decision autonomy. He stated that:

(His father) wasn't the best at saying, "oh yeah, that's a great idea," so I always had questions of my own judgement based on that. But, being able to kind of be given full autonomy of this, it was nice to see that I actually do make smart choices. (P#15)

He found that this opportunity to have some autonomy helped build confidence in himself in terms of entering the industry, and his ability to succeed.

The last three +10 rated stimulus events, as mentioned already, are all social-related, and were three of the four highest rated events (+10 impact on career intentions and well-being). Two of the three social categorized stimulus events were experienced by P#13, who was on the coaching staff of a professional sports team. The first event involved the "brotherhood" aspect of being involved with the athletes on a daily basis, and developed close relationships and bonds with them. An important part of this event was the feeling of being included, and how these close relationships that were fostered,

made getting up for work more enjoyable, and he looked forward to his job every day; he mentioned socializing with these athletes more than his own friends. On top of this event enhancing the internship for him, he discussed how this component of sport around this “brotherhood” and working towards a common goal reinforced why he loves sport in general, and this sport in particular.

The second event in this category that was also experienced by him involved the assistant coach of the team who took him under his wing, so to speak, and ensured he learned as much as possible throughout the internship. The two became close friends as well, and what made this more influential was that this assistant coach could both serve as a mentor and contact moving forward, as P#13 noted that he would be happy to work for him in the future. Further, the participant noted that he worked out with the assistant coach, which he discussed:

We go to the gym together, and he helps me push myself to reach new heights.

I've lost about 10 pounds, and so without him I wouldn't be in the shape I'm in now, and I wouldn't be in the position I'm in right now as well (career). (P#13)

This assistant coach, and essentially supervisor, made sure the intern got more than just some work experience out of the internship, and played an important role for his future.

This reinforced the value to the intern of having a committed supervisor, and in this case, the supervisor went above and beyond what would be expected.

The final social stimulus event was experienced by P#10 and involved a social component of the internship where the staff would play scrimmages in the respective sport they worked in. This served as an opportunity to give members of the large organization the chance to get to know each other and interact with people they may not

see on a daily basis. For him, it was more than that, as he noted that he usually is quite shy and more introverted, but was able to use these scrimmages as a chance to meet new people and even expand his network. While seemingly a small part of the internship initially, this may have been the most important part for him, as he stated:

I've been shy and I haven't been confident in speaking to people, or socializing and things like that. After playing in these games I learned that despite this, I can still socialize and even with such a big organization, be someone who's well known around the entire building. (P#10)

He then went on to add later that as a result:

Playing in those games gave me confidence to say hi to everyone...to all the security guards...to the players, and now they know my name. This grew my confidence and because of that I went from being a shy guy, to being a little bit more extroverted and making the most of my internship. (P#10)

This social aspect of the internship potentially opened up new opportunities in the future as he made more contacts, and the staff were even happy to see him socializing with everyone. As a result, this made him feel like a part of the team.

As previously stated, there were also three other events worth discussing separately, and they are next. Specifically, there were three events that stood out in the “large positive” grouping that had a large impact on career intentions, but lower impact on well-being (at least 5 points lower on the scale). This is worth noting as the other large positive stimulus events impacting career intentions, typically also had an equally, or close to equal, positive impact on well-being. Of these three stimulus events, one was social and career-related, while two task-related stimulus events in this category were

experienced by the same participant, the first of which involved the participant being tasked with the responsibility of redesigning an event program using a software they were not familiar with. Firstly, it had a large impact on career intentions because she was not expecting them to trust her to handle such an important task. Further, since it was a more difficult job, she stated that it built her confidence to succeed: “just because it was something that challenged me, and it proves that I can do larger tasks because I was very nervous going into it” (P#21). She noted that being able to manage this task urged her to: “stay in sport instead of finding a simpler job with simpler tasks in a different industry” (P#21).

The second event involved her being involved in every aspect of a large event that ran over the course of a full weekend. She got to see, and gained experience in different areas such as: audiovisual (AV), logistics, sponsorship, and production. This was an influential stimulus event (+10 on career intentions) primarily because it served the crucial purpose of narrowing down specifically what she wanted to do in the sports industry. This went from, at the beginning of the internship, just wanting to work in sport, to being interested in working in events, to working on sponsorship and activation around events. It is interesting that this did not have an impact on well-being as she had seemingly solidified her career path.

Finally, the third stimulus event that had a similar sized impact (+10) involved P#22 being able to network outside of his department and gain beneficial contacts as a result. He noted:

Meeting all these people and hearing all these different positions they've been in in previous years of their lives, or friends that they have in different positions, I



would say that helped, and would make me want to go into the sport industry some more. I would say learning different routes, but also can benefit contact wise because now I have all these friends who have worked in different organizations to where if there was a job posting that I found, I could contact them and they could give me a good reference for it. (P#22)

This also brings up a theme that will be discussed later in the discussion section around the value of interns learning of different paths into and through the sport industry.

Interestingly as mentioned previously, this event also had a smaller impact on well-being (+5) despite being such a positive occurrence in relation to the rest of this participant's experience, which was negative overall. The remaining stimulus events are reviewed next, starting with the negative events, then moving into the neutral rated events.

**Stimulus events negative.** Of the 89 stimulus events reported, 19 were negative. Of these 19, eight were reported as small negative, eight were medium negative, and three were large negative. As was done with the positive stimulus events, these events will be discussed in order from small-large, and the categories associated with each will be identified. See Figure 3 for a summary of these categories.

**Negative small.** As mentioned, there were eight stimulus events rated as having a small negative impact on career intentions. The first two events were rated on the scale as -1's, were experienced by the same participant (P#16), and were also both task-related. The first of these two task-related events involved the intern having limited tasks at the beginning of her internship; she was given the link to the organization's database and told to go through it. This was somewhat frustrating as she noted they gave her and another

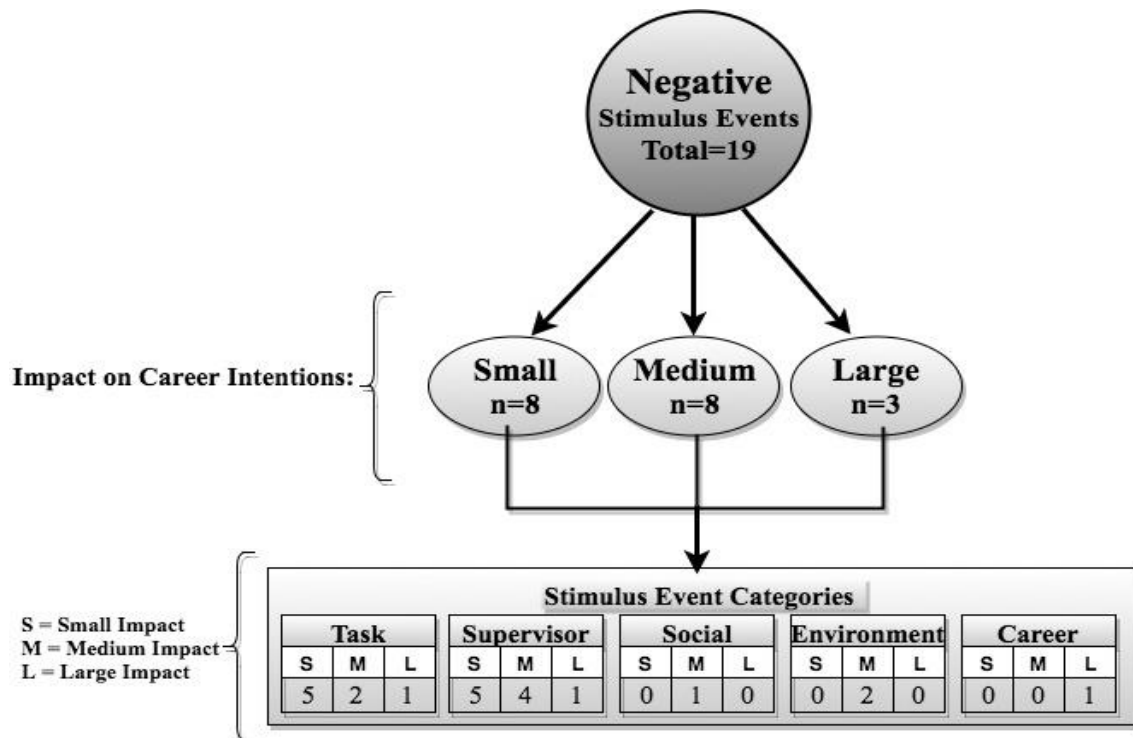


Figure 3. Distribution of negative stimulus events by category and size of impact.

intern no other work at the time, so they were supposed to spend their entire work days at the beginning going through this database. While this was boring to her, she did acknowledge that it was not a big deal as the organization had to learn to trust her in order to assign bigger tasks, and she did gain more responsibility throughout the internship. Therefore, this was not a large event in terms of affecting her career intentions in the long term.

The second event rated -1 in this category was more concerning as she was the on-site point of contact for a children's sporting tournament, and there was a lot of stress that came with the position. Most of this stress came from dealing with parents who would yell at her and the referee, call her inappropriate names, and even follow her around the facility. She elaborated on this occurrence:

So, the one lady got kicked out of the gym, and then every time I'd have to go make a call and leave the gym she'd follow me, she'd even follow me to the bathroom. Afterwards I left thinking, I don't even know if I want to do this, it was bad. (P#16)

Despite this, she talked about how she did her best to not let this event affect her, nor her career intentions: "I wouldn't want to ever think I would let a group of people impact my career and what I want to do with my life, you know? So, I'll lower that (career intentions rating), but then stress obviously affected me a little" (P#16). This was an example of optimism displayed by a participant despite unfortunate circumstances at the internship, and will be discussed in the discussion section.

Of the next three small negative stimulus events that were rated -2 on the scale, all were supervisor-related, and related to the interns feeling not valued, or being left behind in the office with no work. P#16 fell under this category again, noting that her and the other intern at her organization at times felt left out and even spoke down to in a sense when trying to offer their opinions, even if they felt quite knowledgeable on the topics. She noted that it was frustrating to put in their time and effort into the internship, then feel like they were not taken seriously; she even stated it was taken more personally. Another stimulus event similar to this was experienced by P#6 who was promised the opportunity to help out at events on different occasions by her supervisor, but on the day of the events, the supervisor would not show up and would just leave her at the office with nothing to do. This was unfortunately a theme during her internship at times as she found there were a number of days she would be left with little to no work, and worse, no valued work, which in turn did not help her moving forward. Fortunately, she had

multiple supervisors, and the others would offer more opportunities and provide tasks consistently.

The third -2 rated stimulus event was less notable, and involved a supervisor that was forced to be away on business trips much of the time, and due to the organization only having one other staff member, if the supervisor was gone, the intern would work from home a lot. Therefore, it was tough for the participant to ask questions and get feedback with the supervisor gone so frequently.

Of the final three small negative stimulus events, one was supervisor-related, one was task-related, and one fell under both categories. The supervisor-related stimulus event involved an incompetent manager that P#7 stated was ineffective at running the sporting facility they worked at, and did not plan a league properly. Further, the supervisor's actions forced the other staff and her to deal with some issues that should not have occurred in the first place, and caused unnecessary stress. Of the two task-related events rated as -3, one involved an intern being expected to take down and pack up the organization's event set-up, and the other employees leaving as it was "beneath them" to do.

The other task-related small negative stimulus event occurred with P#6, who was previously discussed, and involved her supervisor giving her a major project around an event that she was supposed to play a large role in. However, once she started, her supervisor took over the event fully and left her in the dark, which she indicated left a negative impression: "[That] made me a little bit angry...as she completely took over and I didn't help do very much at all. It left a negative impact in my mind as to her being a supervisor not letting me participate" (P#6).

*Negative medium.* The negative medium stimulus events fell under a few categories as four were supervisor-related, two were task related, one was social-related, and three were related to the internship environment. One of the two events rated as having a -4 impact on career intentions was another example of an intern (P#5) being given little work during the internship, particularly towards the end. He stated that it was frustrating to not be given work at times: “[It] was frustrating and kind of discouraging. I always wanted to feel like I was contributing and helping. If not, you kind of feel like you’re not a contributing factor anymore, not quite as important” (P#5). This reinforced the importance of giving the interns tasks; however, this was a bit different as typically the lack of tasks came at the beginning of the internships.

The second stimulus event that received a -4 rating occurred when P#21’s supervisor promised her weekly networking opportunities that would help her moving forward, but failed to deliver on this promise during the internship. This was particularly disappointing for her as she stated how significant the networking component is, especially since it is emphasized within the sport management program:

I think that it's huge as it's drilled into us that networking is a huge part of getting into the sport industry, and it's who you know, and everything like that. So, not having the comfort of making connections throughout my internship kind of made me think that if I don't have connections I can't get into the sport industry, so maybe I should just shy away from it. (P#21)

As displayed in this quote, it is unfortunate that this promise was not delivered on as she felt it had a negative impact on her career intentions, and made her reconsider her future.

The next group of negative stimulus events were those rated -5 on the career intentions impact scale, and the first was tied to the social dynamics and environment in P#22's organization. Disappointingly, he felt that in his department, one group of staff members had their own "clique", and when him and the other interns would try and approach them, the group would clearly not be interested. This was disappointing because he wanted to try to network, as this is an important opportunity for interns to do so, as just discussed with P#21. He attributed this event to this group potentially feeling more important than others because their department focused on professional athletes and events, while other departments were focused on amateur level events.

The next two stimulus events rated as -5 were tied to poor supervisor behaviour, the first of which was with P#7's supervisor who would never implement the promotional materials or ideas that he would tell her to prepare, rendering her work essentially useless, and not showing appreciation for her hard work. She also reported another stimulus event as -6, which is relevant because it involved the previous intern at this organization warning her about how poor of an experience he had, particularly with this supervisor; while she tried not to let this affect her too much, the supervisor forgot on her first day that she was starting, and did not show up. By the end of the internship, the organization was going out of business mainly because of the poor practices and leadership of this supervisor.

The second stimulus event mentioned that was supervisor-related and rated as -5 on career intentions was experienced by P#6, as she stated that one of the higher-up staff members (her supervisor's supervisor) would not acknowledge the interns at all during the internship. She stated that this woman would walk by them without acknowledging

them, and even in meetings would skip over them: “Our supervisor’s supervisor didn’t make us feel valued, she just wouldn’t really acknowledge our existence,” and that “you want to feel like you’re worth something when you’re an intern in a new place like that,” but obviously this was not the case at times (P#6).

A number of participants brought up a point of having lower expectations at times because of how the media and others have portrayed interns as almost being associated with these types of experiences, and while the majority of participants in this study did not experience this, it was unfortunate to see this type of behaviour from a member of this organization.

One of the last medium negative stimulus events worth noting was environment-related and involved P#19, who stated that the culture at his organization was rather inappropriate at times, especially due to one staff member from the sales department. He found that this individual’s inappropriate behavior would make others in the organization uncomfortable and even cause tension, including speaking down to younger interns. He noted being on good terms with the person by the end of the internship, but that he had to say something to him at one point because the organization let the behaviour continue. He even stated that in another industry he had worked in extensively in the past, some of the behaviour that occurred in this organization would never have been tolerated; it was unprofessional at times.

**Negative large.** The final three negative stimulus events fall under the negative large category, one of which was career-related, one supervisor-related, and one task-related. The career-related event was also experienced by P#19 who described the event as a “bubble pop moment” where he realized the sport industry may not be feasible for

him as he was overqualified for many of the jobs he was eligible for, and could not live comfortably off the wages he would earn at these positions. It is worth noting he was older than a lot of the other interns in this study and referred to sport as a younger person's industry. He still had a great experience with the organization and would have been happy to stay, but even the higher-ups stated he was overqualified for what they could offer; besides the salary, the culture also made him begin to consider returning to his previous career. This was a tough realization for him as he had really enjoyed the sport management program, and it had been his dream to be in sport.

The second large negative event was supervisor-related and involved issues one participant had with his supervisor throughout his experience. P#4 stated that their personalities did not mesh from the beginning, and the supervisor failed to motivate the staff in general which made it harder to work under. Also, he would struggle to get any feedback on his work from the supervisor which was a source of frustration as there were times he just wanted his supervisor to let him know if he was completing his tasks properly, or needed to adjust anything. This is understandable due to the interns not being comfortable making decisions on their own, especially early on in the internship. For example, this was brought up and discussed by P#5 about being unsure what to do when they had been given little to no tasks and were sitting around the office: "That feeling of sitting in your desk being like, ok, where do I go from now? I don't want to be a headache to him banging on his door asking for work, so that was definitely a negative" (P#5).

The final large negative stimulus event was task-related and involved repetitive menial tasks being given to P#8, and the other staff members ignoring the work he was doing. He described the event:



It was frustrating doing these little tasks every week when I know that the five people are not going to take time out of their busy day to read this report, and then would ask you a question of something specific that you already covered in your report. (P#8)

Further, while he said it would not go as far as to make him upset, it still was the worst part of the internship.

It was positive that the majority of the stimulus events were rated as positive occurrences, but some of these negative events were concerning in terms of what happened, and the resulting impact on the interns. Furthermore, there were some events that participants rated as neutral in terms of the impact they had.

**Neutral events.** Of the 84 stimulus events discussed, six were rated as having no impact on career intentions – however with the exception of one event, they did impact well-being. It is worth noting that it was proposed that stimulus events were to be categorized by participants as positive or negative only; however, these events were the exception. Two of these neutral stimulus events were discussed by P#17 who was interning overseas, and these events were related to how tough it was coming home, and some of the support the staff provided when arriving in the new country. As a result, she noted that these did not necessarily have a negative impact on her career intentions, but certainly stood out in terms of being notable events during her experience.

Another neutral stimulus event occurred with P#28 as he felt that he did not fit in as much with the other employees at the organization due to his own personality, and the social interactions some of the others would have (particularly, their senses of humour). Further, he noted being left out at times as a result, and felt they would not take him as

seriously in terms of ideas presented; an example of this was discussed on page 103 with the +9 stimulus event around the team theme he proposed.

A task-related neutral event that occurred was simply around P#23 having no tasks at the beginning, but he noted it did not influence his career intentions at all as it is understandable that the organization did not have any tasks available immediately. This was due to the organization having shifted offices, and members had recently finished a three-week Christmas break.

The last two neutral stimulus events were both supervisor-related, the first of which involved P#7's ineffective supervisor (discussed previously). She was given a task to focus on for her major project, and after completing it, the supervisor did not look at it, nor need it, as the organization was already going out of business. She stated: "In a sense it felt like my project was pointless after that, all the work I put into it, and he didn't even care to even look at it" (P#7). However, she was optimistic and said it balanced out in the end as she gained valuable experience and developed her research skills, and still enjoyed conducting the research for it.

The final neutral stimulus event occurred to P#22 when he found that he was not included by his supervisor in meetings at the office, or off location with partners of the organization. This was a source of frustration as he wanted to experience being in the meetings, and assumed inclusion in such events would be an important aspect of the internship. Further, he commented that: "I would just be left in the dark without even being told where they were going. That would probably be the biggest [event]" (P#22). Later on, as a result of this and likely other stimulus events, he explained the impact: "I would say that I kind of felt a lot more, I wouldn't say sad, but unhappy, just because

going to work every day and doing that commute to feel kind of worthless...felt worthless to me” (P#22). He noted himself as being a relatively positive person. He mentioned trying to keep a positive mindset throughout, as well as not let it affect his desire to enter sport, and attempted to take as many positives out of it as he could. His quotation mentioned commuting, and is important as the role external stimulus events may have played must be discussed as well.

**External events.** During interviews, participants were asked if any events occurred during their internship that were completely external in terms of where they occurred and what happened (i.e., family-related, or health issues). While most participants stated nothing worth noting was going on, there were still some events briefly worth mentioning. First, having just described P#22, he had a long daily commute that, while he tried to not let it affect him, had some effect as he mentioned: “Going an hour and a half to go to a job that I’m not getting paid at probably ruined my mindset a little bit to make it a little bit more negative.” Combined with the point that he also specifically stated his internship was a negative experience, this commute could have added additional stress. The commute was also the main external issue for P#15 who was busy with external commitments (school and sports) after his internship during the day, and he found that some days he was not feeling the best as a result. Despite this, he did have a positive experience overall and always enjoyed going to work.

Another example of a negative external event occurred when one participant revealed a long-term relationship had ended during the internship, and had likely had at least a small affect, but tried to keep it separate from the experience. This participant had

a very positive experience at the organization they interned with, and reported only large positive stimulus events.

Lastly, P#6 stated that she was living away from home for the first time in a different city, and it may have had a small impact on her experience (partially negative) as she was adjusting to her new home. These external events were discussed by participants, but seemed to have relatively small impacts on the outcomes of this study.

**Adapted stimulus events model.** As presented in Chapter 1 in the proposed model (Figure 1), stimulus events were projected as having an effect on well-being as a result of the impact on career intentions. In terms of the 84 stimulus event ratings that were reported, five had no impact on well-being at all (rating of 0), and one of these had no impact on both well-being and career-intentions; these will not be discussed. Additionally, five stimulus events had no impact on career intentions, but some impact on well-being, and these will be reviewed further, below. Remaining are 78 stimulus events that were used to attempt to test the proposed model, 61 of which had career intentions and well-being scores within three numbers of each other on the rating scale (+3 or -3); meaning ratings indicate the events have relatively similar level impacts on the two outcomes.

Regarding the proposed Unfolding Model, in applying it to the internship context, the Model was adjusted with the belief that three paths would relate to the occurrence of stimulus events, or lack thereof: (1) Stimulus event occurs, student carries out predetermined script, results in career intention shift; (2) Stimulus event occurs, student weighs against images, results in career intention shift; and (3) No stimulus event occurs, still results in career intention shift. To clarify once again, the difference between path 1

and 2 was that in path 1 the student anticipated the event to some degree, and when it happened, it resulted in an impact on career intentions. Paths 1 and 2 are most applicable, especially path 2, because the majority of stimulus events were unanticipated. Path 3 could still remain relevant to the model; however, every intern reported stimulus events (some up to six) that were notable to the student. It is difficult to imagine an internship where no notable events occurred. Path 3 could therefore be removed, and one addition would include one where events occur that have no impact on the student. While this was unanticipated, as noted, there were a small group of events reported as having no impact on career intentions. Next, how these events fit within the proposed model, and some suggested areas for exploration within the Unfolding Model are presented.

After analyzing the participants' data, it seems that many of the stimulus events fit the proposed model (see Pathway 1 of Figure 4), and the resulting impacts of some events may require expansion, or further consideration of the model (see Pathways 2-4 of Figure 4). This will be reviewed in the following subsections, starting with events that impacted well-being as a result of career intentions (initial proposed model), then events that impacted career intentions as a result of well-being, followed briefly by events that impacted well-being directly, with minimal or no impact on career intentions, and finally events that had separate, unrelated impacts on career intentions and well-being.

***Pathway 1.*** As highlighted in the proposed model (Figure 1), participant well-being would be influenced by the impact of stimulus events on career intentions. Of the reported stimulus events, the majority (41) fall under this category of impacting well-being as a result of career intentions. Interestingly, of the 41 large positive stimulus events alone, 29 of them impacted career intentions first, then well-being as a result. For

clarification, the majority of the stimulus events that impacted well-being as a result of the impact on career intentions, were large positive events on the rating scale. Further, 21 of these 29 events were task-related, which is logical as they involved occurrences, many of which have been described, where the student successfully managed challenging tasks which benefitted their career moving forward (e.g., skill development, valuable experience moving forward, helped narrow down career path), and therefore positively influenced well-being as they were gaining something useful from the internship experience.

There are also examples of stimulus events where the career intentions impact was smaller than the well-being impact, but still seem to match the proposed model. One instance where the well-being impact was slightly larger than the career intentions impact is from P#16 after she successfully acted as a tournament site supervisor, and proved she could successfully do so. While it impacted her career intentions in terms of seeing that she could manage these types of responsibilities on her own with limited assistance or supervision, it just made her feel happy and good about herself as well as her performance. A potentially important part of this was due to some of the negative occurrences during the event itself that she dealt with, as described on pages 112-113. As mentioned, there were also events that did not follow the proposed model specifically, which are described next.

***Pathway 2.*** Beyond the proposed model, there was evidence of well-being impacting career intentions (following stimulus events). Specifically, 16 stimulus events, after analysis, were deemed to have impacted well-being first, and in turn, career intentions afterwards as a result. The categories of these events ranged from some task

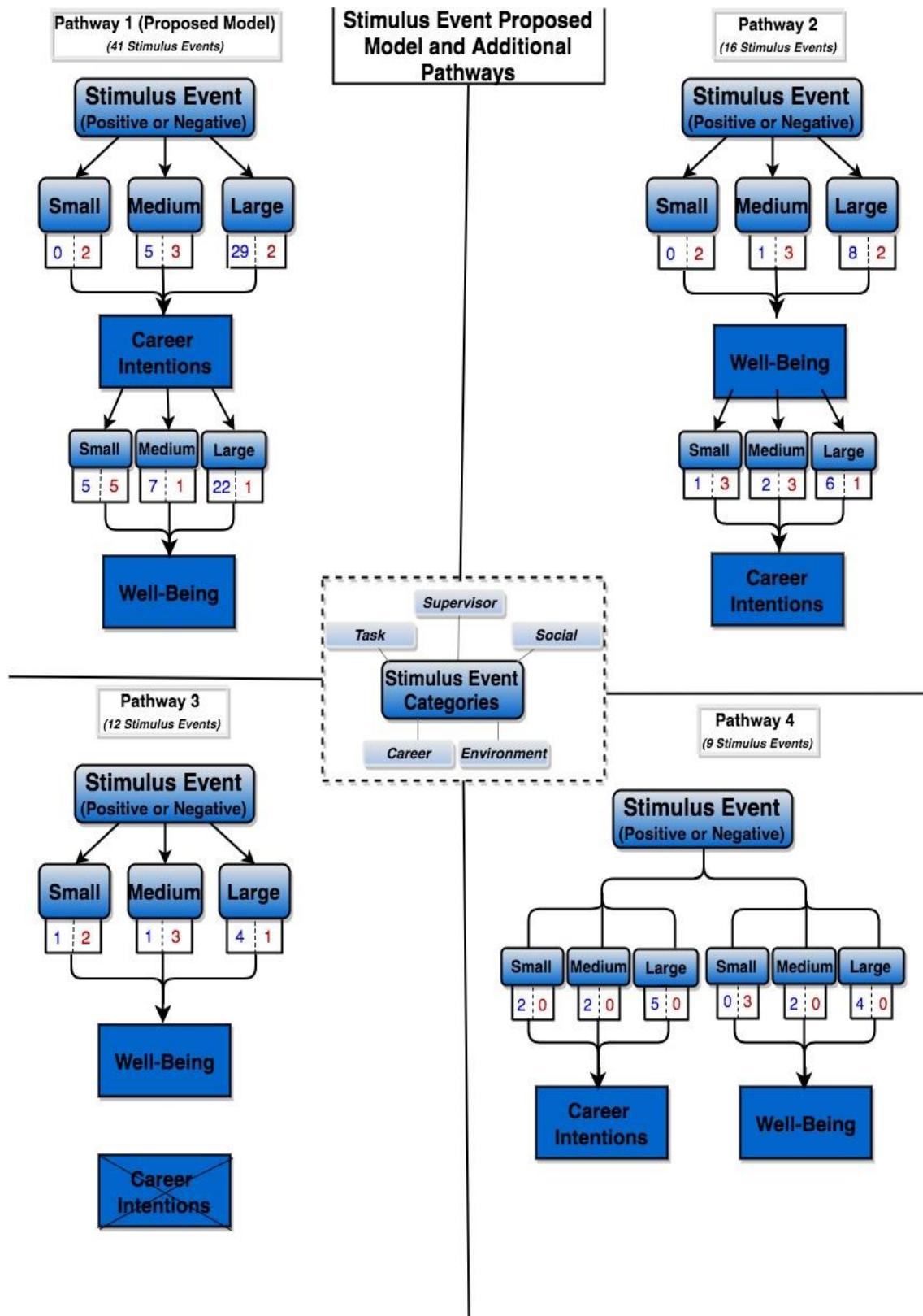


Figure 4. Original Proposed Model and Additional Pathways

related, to social, supervisor, and environment-related; the majority were categorized as social or supervisor-related. With events that impacted well-being first, what seemed to happen in some of these cases was that they influenced the student in a way that in turn influenced the experience and outcome (career intentions) further. More specifically, an example is from P#10's stimulus event where he participated in staff athletic games, which gave him an outlet to meet new people and get out of his comfort zone more (he noted himself as being introverted and shy), which then led to him becoming more involved in the organization. Further, he stated that this social participation and becoming well-known allowed him to gain confidence in his social skills, build great relationships with coworkers, and in turn made him want to go back to this organization. This social outlet which made him more comfortable at the organization allowed him to get more out of the internship, and influenced his career intentions.

There were some negative stimulus events that demonstrated this outcome impact order as well, and 7/16 of the events in this category were negative occurrences to the participants. One example was P#16 who did not feel valued, as described on page 113 where she felt left out and spoken down to at times. At the time this impacted her well-being directly, as she explained that it made her feel lesser: "I'd take this more personal [*compared to other stimulus events*] just because it's like, why aren't you valuing our (*both interns* ' ) opinion? Were here every day, and it just didn't feel good knowing I'd put all this time and effort just to not be taken as seriously" (P#16). In turn, this event, and her experience in particular, impacted her career intentions as she was seriously reconsidering her career options moving forward; she wanted to remain in sport, but was not sure if it was for her or not. This event involved a large impact on well-being, and



then a smaller impact on career intentions after, on the stimulus event rating scale. There were also some events that impacted well-being alone, which are briefly covered next.

**Pathway 3.** As stated previously, there were some stimulus events (12) that seemingly directly impacted well-being only. One example was from P#8, where the event involved a supervisor that was committed to the intern's development and gave feedback during the internship, was harder on the intern's mistakes later in the internship, and gave advice for moving forward. While he gave it a +3 impact on career intentions, he stated that it really did not impact career intentions specifically, but could have helped him short term on the job; regardless, the key impact was on well-being, and showed the value, once again, of a committed supervisor.

Two other clear examples where the events were reported as directly impacting well-being were experienced by P#22 and P#16. The stimulus event experienced by P#22 was outlined on pages 120-121 where he discussed feeling "worthless" at times when not included, particularly in meetings. As mentioned, he did not let it affect his career intentions in terms of sport, but it certainly impacted his well-being as a result. With P#16 and her unfortunate experience with aggressive parents on-site while working, similar to P#22, she tried to not let a small group of people affect her desire to enter sport. However, the event itself, and the stress associated with it, certainly impacted her well-being at the time, as it was difficult to ignore and she was in charge. There were also some events that impacted both outcomes separately, which are briefly covered next.

**Pathway 4.** Finally, and again beyond the proposed model, nine stimulus events also had separate impacts on both outcomes, where the impacts do not seem to be related. The first example of this was from P#17 who was tasked with running classes at schools

as described on page 93 and received assistance from a local teacher. The impact on career intentions was around gaining valuable experience teaching that could help her if she remains in this particular part of the sport industry, and seeing it go well. However, the larger well-being impact from this event came from the coach who assisted her being a great resource, as she stated: “He was kind of the top of the spectrum for me, and made me realize that some of the other teachers kind of weren’t pulling their weight, and then gave me confidence to approach them about the situation” (P#17). Another example from her was around the sport league she participated in, which also was briefly mentioned previously (p. 92). This social activity during her internship impacted her career intentions because it was a valuable opportunity to network with individuals involved in the sport she was working in, that she would not normally be able to network with, as they were from different areas of the country (QE scholar). Additionally, the league she participated in was a variation of the sport she was working in and loved, and wanted to possibly start a league back home in Canada. In terms of well-being though, it was an opportunity to socialize, meet new people in general, and gave her an activity to look forward to weekly. These events are two examples of how some stimulus events can have different impacts on the outcome of study, and while this did not occur frequently, it was worth noting as a result.

In reviewing the numerous stimulus events experienced by the participants, it becomes more evident just how complex the sport management internship context is for students in this program. Figure 4 represents the paths between stimulus events, career intentions, and well-being uncovered within the present sample of students.

The following discussion section will further elaborate on how these events fit within the current theory, and tie-in some important themes captured within Chapter 2 of this thesis.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

As has been mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis, internships are designed to give students the opportunity to gain valuable experience in the industry they are studying, develop skills, and gain other benefits that will assist the transition into their field. Whether or not the internship will go as planned and provide the numerous desired benefits is difficult to predict, and the varied internship experiences, both good and bad, have been studied in the literature. This is particularly relevant in a complex industry (e.g., multiple sectors, supervisors, and roles) such as the sport industry (Odio et al., 2014). However, what specifically leads to a positive or negative internship, and what kind of impact these experiences have on students, is not fully understood. Therefore, the purpose of his study was to examine the types, and perceived impact, of stimulus events on students' career decision making, and well-being, in the context of internships within a sport management program. This study set forth to answer three main research questions around this purpose, which are restated below:

1. What is the perceived nature of stimulus events related to internship experiences of sport management student interns?
2. What is the perceived relationship between internship stimulus events and career decision making among sport management undergraduate interns?
3. What is the perceived relationship between career decision making and student well-being among sport management undergraduate interns?

The findings from both the surveys and interviews presented in Chapter 4 provide some interesting insight into these eventful experiences. As has been mentioned and cannot be overstated, the internship context is very complex. The following discussion, using the

quantitative and qualitative findings, will explain the adjusted Unfolding Model and Met Expectations model, in this context, following by a review of career intentions and well-being, concluded with a description of stimulus events. Additionally, limitations of this study, propositions for future research, and a concluding summary based on these findings will be presented in the final chapter.

### **Proposed Unfolding Model**

As has been outlined, following Odio et al.'s (2014) study on sport management interns, Lee and Mitchell's (1994) Unfolding Model of Employee Turnover was adopted and adjusted to be applied to the internship context, but expanded to include stimulus events. Further, as well-being had not been studied in this context, it was added as an outcome that was predicted to be influenced by an impact on career intentions; Figure 1 on page 25 outlines this proposed model. This section will discuss what the findings revealed around how the stimulus events fit within the proposed model, how applicable this model is, and some proposed changes resulting from the new findings.

**Pathway 1.** The main intended contribution of this study to the Unfolding Model as a follow-up to Odio et al. (2014), was understanding if, and how, well-being factors into the internship context as a result of any changes to career intentions. Predominantly, stimulus events do fit within the proposed model (see Figure 4) in terms of being reported as positive or negative, being rated as small, medium, or large, then impacting career intentions, and well-being as a result. This was seen particularly with any events that involved meaningful work experiences or interactions that would be translatable moving forward, and built confidence in the student (i.e. meaningful and challenging tasks, skills developed, contacts gained). Considering the majority of the events were rated as

positive, and either assisted with narrowing down career paths or at the least solidified that sport was the industry these participants wanted to remain in, well-being was positively influenced. Oppositely, negative stimulus events, especially around potential unmet expectations, can influence intern well-being, bringing more attention to the importance of considering student well-being in this context. Additionally, some proposed adjustments to the model can be made as findings revealed some other stimulus event outcomes.

**Pathway 2.** As presented in the findings, stimulus events can, oppositely from the proposed model, impact career intentions as a result of the impact on well-being (see Figure 4). Importantly, this outcome is prevalent with both positive and negative occurrences within the internship, particularly around social aspects of the experience such as if the intern is welcomed by other staff members, or feels included and/or valued. As has been discussed, supervisory and employee interactions play a larger role than expected, and negative experiences in this regard can, as a result, shift career intentions. Though discussed in the context of new employees (see pages 140-141), Fisher's (1985) findings around the importance of social support for newcomers could be an important consideration for understanding this uncovered stimulus event impact outcome. Further, the findings around this stimulus event impact and outcome warrant addition to the proposed model.

**Pathway 3.** Another notable model change would involve events that do not have any impact on career intentions, only well-being (see Figure 4). The optimism theme appears most present in this outcome category as interns tried to, again, find value in negative cases, or at the least, not let unfortunate events influence their desire to enter

sport. However, it was clear that the small grouping of events that fell into this category were more notable in terms of impacting intern well-being, and make a stronger argument for the inclusion of well-being in this model.

**Pathway 4.** The final minor addition involves circumstances where the events impact career intentions and well-being separately, as demonstrated in the findings (see Figure 4). Events within this category may be situational, and based on the personality of the intern, as the impacts seem to be a result of how the intern reacts to the event itself. The theme around participant optimism may help explain this result as the heightened emphasis on internship utility (by sport management educators) combined with an individual's personality and desire to work in the sport industry may influence this association.

Reviewed next is the applicability of the Met Expectations Model in relation to this internship context.

### **Met Expectations Model**

As reviewed in Chapter 2, the Met Expectations Model is a simple approach to understanding job satisfaction which proposed that employees bring their own unique expectations to a job, and the degree to which these are met determines how satisfied they are (Porter & Steers, 1973). These unique expectations described by Porter and Steers (1973) included some of the aspects that were important to interns as well, such as supervisor relations, peer interactions, or challenging work. This model, though predicted to be relevant in the internship context, appears to play a more important role in the internship experience and the impact stimulus events have on the outcomes (career intentions and well-being). As has been covered in the literature extensively, internship

expectations are a concern in that there seem to be different issues around mistaken expectations on behalf of the students (Day, 2012; Lam & Ching, 2007), unrealistic (i.e., the intern not being prepared) intern expectations (Barnett, 2012; Chen & Chen, 2011, Cunningham et al., 2005), and even issues at times around supervisors mistakenly believing interns are more satisfied than they really are with the experience (Friedman & Roodin, 2013). As was found, interns did often enter the internship with high expectations, and this can impact just how beneficial experiences are in some cases. The reported stimulus events – small, medium, and large – help shed insight into how expectations influence how the students are affected by occurrences within the experience.

While many stimulus events were unexpected in general, when they were related to some form of expected benefit, they had larger impacts on the student. An example of this involved students having opportunities to network and gain contacts, or oppositely expecting to, and not getting the opportunity. The events have a large impact to begin with as students already have their own expectations of what they will gain from the experience, but supervisors in some cases seem to hint at certain experiences or opportunities the interns will have, and on occasion fail to deliver. These have large negative impacts on the students' career intentions and/or well-being, and the impact may be enhanced if the student is uncertain about a career to begin with, but also fails to receive certain anticipated benefits from the experience. This reinforces Yiu and Law's (2012) findings that stress the importance of employers or supervisors understanding the expectations of the student, and the student understanding the supervisors' expectations; both parties need to be on the same page.



Matching the proposed Met Expectations Model, the impact of the stimulus events seems to become more noticeable either when expectations are falling short (particularly around aspects of the internship that interns know are important to establishing a career in sport), or when the stimulus event involves the student gaining more from the experience than expected. Finally, while expectations were high going in (particularly around internship utility), and unmet in certain cases, they appear to be realistic and based on information provided by the organization's members (i.e., during the interview process, or internship job posting), and therefore the onus is on the supervisor to ensure they are aware of what the interns expect to receive, and try to deliver. If not, this brings up the symbiotic relationship discussion by Odio et al. (2014) which notes that if all groups are not committed, nobody benefits.

**Lack of pay.** As outlined previously, this study's sample involved interns that were not paid as the internship was for-credit; small honorariums were at times included. However, at times, some participants did mention the lack of pay, and that it was occasionally a source of frustration, particularly if the experience was not going well. This was exhibited clearly on page 121 with P#22 as he was losing money commuting every day to an experience where he was receiving few benefits in return. This relates first to the literature cited around paid internships being argued as more organized and creating more meaningful experiences (Caddell et al., 2013); this unpaid experience was the opposite. This is also relevant to the expectations discussion as there are three key factors in current study's context: 1) interns are paying to intern for-credit (full tuition), 2) they are not being paid in return, and 3) they may be paying more for living costs (i.e., rent) within proximity of their internship location, or gas and car payments to commute to

the internship. Based on these three factors, this could impact the expectations the interns have for the experience due to them essentially paying for this experience, they expect to receive something in return. Therefore, if the experience does not go as well as anticipated, it may affect an intern to a greater degree if limited benefits are perceived by the intern.

These findings helped identify the impact that meeting expectations, or failing to do so, can have on interns. Further, as was discussed previously, the expectations can influence just how significant the impact of the stimulus events are on the students' well-being and career intentions, and are an important consideration in understanding the internship context; the impacts of stimulus events on career intentions and well-being are discussed next.

### **Impact on Career Intentions**

As mentioned, one key outcome of focus was further understanding the nature of the stimulus events occurring during intern experiences, and how they impact the students' career intentions moving forward. In their foundational work, Odio et al. (2014) found that significant events within the sport management student internship can lead to intern dissatisfaction and thoughts of leaving the industry entirely, or redirecting to a different part of the sector they were in. As a whole, Odio et al. (2014) found that there was a lot of career uncertainty from students after their internship, and quite a few had not established clear goals for their career. However, the experience typically is more of a process that seems to solidify that the sport industry is the right industry for the interns via these stimulus events. In the present study, the findings of Odio et al. (2014) were

extended in that stimulus events had differing impacts on the process that varied based on the intern.

Specifically, small stimulus events (e.g., additional tasks given, opinion valued) in general can impact career intentions of students, but appear to be complimentary events that contribute to how well the experience goes. More frequently, the positive small events appeared to act as events from which lessons or knowledge can be gained, but are less memorable and influential as a whole. Medium positive stimulus events were not much different from the smaller events in how they were categorized, but the significance of the events increased. These medium impact events (e.g., inclusion, successfully completed tasks) occurred further into the experience when the intern had more responsibility, and therefore more challenges were faced by the intern as a result. In turn, these events had larger impacts on career intentions in that they provided perspective on what the intern was looking for in the industry, or what aspects of the industry may be less appealing. They are still beneficial and factor into what work the interns will look for when determining a career in the future, but are not necessarily as career defining.

Large positive stimulus events specifically reflect where substantial expectations are at least met, or exceeded for the intern. Further, large positive stimulus events represent what the internship literature typically state as the ideal circumstances and conditions of internships, such as: inclusion, meaningful tasks and work experience, challenging work, autonomy, facilitated networking, and support from organization members (Bennett et al., 2008; Chen & Chen, 2011; Maertz et al., 2013; Surujlal & Serra, 2014). These events were meaningful to the interns in that they solidified that not only was the industry for them, but also that they could succeed in it.

Alternatively, negative stimulus events were more complex in terms of how they affected career intentions. Negative stimulus events as a whole – small, medium and large – did impact career intentions, particularly decreasing the interns' desire to remain with the internship organization and/or work in that type of department. However, participants minimized the impact that these events had on their view of sport as a whole, which reflected some degree of optimism by the participants towards the internship, in general. This optimism may be a result of the sport industry's reliance on internships (Odio et al., 2014), and the programmatic pressure put on interns to succeed and receive value from their experience. Therefore, if the internship did not go as expected, the interns in this study tried to reframe their experience and search for value.

The negative stimulus events also reinforced where some of the interns' core expectations were, and where internships fell short. In turn, while interns maintained a desire to enter sport regardless of how negative some of these events were, the resulting impact on career intentions was typically career uncertainty moving forward.

To reiterate, and consistent with Odio et al.'s (2014) findings, regardless of events being positive or negative, internships do not seem to propel students into the industry (i.e., jobs immediately afterwards). Rather, they typically ended with the participants' desire to remain in the sport industry; however, with much uncertainty around where specifically that journey will take them. Therefore, the stimulus events impacted the degree of uncertainty faced by the student. As Odio et al. (2014) stated, internships impact how students frame their future job search, and the findings here show that these stimulus events can narrow down career paths, or create new interesting paths for the interns to consider pursuing in the future.

It is important to note that expectations play a large role in how students view these events, and the impacts they have. A small event to one student was also reported as having a large impact on another. This reinforced the significance of expectations and the Met Expectations Model, as discussed above.

### **Impact on Well-Being**

The second outcome of study in relation to stimulus events was well-being, and more specifically the impact of career intentions on well-being. The findings here show that how stimulus events influence career intentions and subsequently well-being is dependent partially on the category of the stimulus events. Specifically, task-related stimulus events impacted well-being in different forms depending on the responsibility given during the task, and typically related to the level of impact that the event had on career intentions. In short, the more meaningful the work and the larger the influence on career intentions moving forward, the larger the impact on well-being. This relates to Hackman and Oldham's (1978) Work Motivation discussion around the characteristic of task significance, variety, and identity, as these characteristics contribute to individuals' satisfaction. Therefore, it is realistic that, for example, an individual completing a challenging task from start to finish, which helps build confidence in themselves and their ability to succeed in the future, as well as seeing their work have a positive impact on others (the organization, or those external to the organization), would certainly influence well-being.

Another important aspect of the impact on well-being involved the expectations of the internship, and what the intern hoped to get out of the experience. As reviewed in Chapter 2, Diener et al. (1999) discussed the importance of individuals making progress

towards and/or meeting their goals, on the nature of individual well-being. Within the internship context, as participants were hoping to gain valuable experience that would lead to or contribute to getting a job in the future, Diener et al.'s findings may help explain why certain stimulus events in particular were important to well-being. Further, in Van der Vaart et al.'s (2013) study of psychological contracts (e.g., expectations) among employees, they found that well-being would increase or decrease based on met or unmet expectations, respectively. Therefore, depending on what participants expected to get out of their internship, and if those expectations were met (or unmet), the participants' well-being fluctuated. In particular, for unmet expectations, the interns felt unprepared to enter the industry, or simply uncertain about their future career in sport, in turn decreasing well-being. This decrease in well-being caused by an impact on career intentions may be explained by an aspect important to well-being as discussed by Ryff (1989), which was a sense of direction or purpose in life. Ryff (1989) also discussed well-being as being related to being satisfied with the relationships with other individuals. This supports the findings of the present study where participants' well-being was directly influenced by the positive and negative social aspects of the internship.

The findings of the present study also showed that stimulus events can directly impact well-being, irrespective of career intentions. This was especially seen through the social side of the internship, and reinforces Coknaz (2014) as well as Saks and Gruman's (2011), who identified the influence around positive interactions. Within the present study, it was clear that socializing and building relationships was very important for these sport interns. Interestingly, in reviewing the potential importance of social support in adjusting newcomers to the workplace, Fisher (1985) noted that stronger support from

employees or the supervisor could reduce stress around unmet-expectations. While this current study was one of the first to look at well-being in the internship context, considering the role expectations play in the internship context, Fisher's (1985) findings could be equally, if not more, relevant to internships.

In terms of differentiating the impact of small, medium, or large-sized stimulus events on well-being, the resulting impact for the most part matched the impact on career intentions; if the event had a large impact on the students' career considerations, it impacted well-being in a similar manner. However, as discussed, some events had larger impacts on well-being, or only affected well-being, and differentiating with confidence between stimulus event ratings on this outcome is difficult. Though unable to be stated with certainty, the expectations of the intern and level of satisfaction with the experience could be what moderates the significance of the impact of these events on well-being. The following section addresses the nature of the stimulus events within this study.

### **Stimulus Events**

Stimulus events, as covered in Chapter 4, were found to occur in many different situations to students, were sometimes predictable, but more often unexpected, as well as had differing impacts on the students' career intentions and well-being. The impact on outcomes was dependent on different factors and circumstances where the complexity of the internship context was evident in analyzing the stimulus events. The intricacies of navigating these experiences for students and where the events would occur revolves particularly around differing situational factors, some of which include: the number of supervisors (some had one, others had three), social atmospheres, organizational cultures (expectations or accepted behaviour), supervisor commitment levels (to the intern and

their development), and the levels of involvement or tasks entrusted to interns. The majority of the stimulus events that did occur were presented in Chapter 4, and the commonalities and main takeaways from these events will be discussed next.

**Supervisors and tasks.** The intern's supervisor(s) and the tasks given to them were two key categories in the survey data when determining where events may have occurred, and in the interviews when it came to classifying the stimulus events. While they were two separate categories, they are very much interconnected, and also bring up further evidence for the symbiotic relationship nature of the internship, as discussed by Odio et al. (2014); this will be elaborated on later in this section.

**Supervisors.** The supervisor plays a crucial role in the internship for the students because they are largely responsible for how much the student will get out of their experience. In terms of some of the negative stimulus events reported in this study, they match what Lam and Ching (2007) indicated, in that one key issue that caused dissatisfaction of interns was around the internship supervisor and their failure to provide sufficient jobs rotation or their failure to treat the intern fairly. Despite high intern expectations around how involved the supervisors would be, the post-internship survey ratings indicated some occurrences matching what Lam and Ching (2007) found could cause dissatisfaction, and the interviews solidified this. This also relates to Day's (2012) discussion around some of the key mistaken expectations of students, particularly around how involved or committed the supervisor(s) may be, as this was seen in this study. However, one distinction was that multiple supervisors did not prove to be an issue with interns in this current sample; this was a concern noted by Day (2012), and considered by Odio and Kerwin (2016) in relation to opposing instructions from different supervisors.



Instead, it proved to be a benefit as at least one supervisor was committed to the intern, and ensured the intern received some benefit from the experience, even if another supervisor was not committed. Therefore, this indicates that the priority should be on the supervisor's commitment level to the intern, which was evident in the survey data and reinforced the importance of the supervisor in general.

An aspect of this commitment is the level of support the supervisor provides in general to the intern, which Hurst, Good, and Gardner (as cited in Odio & Kerwin, 2016) also noted as being an important determinant of student retail internship satisfaction. In the sport management context, Odio and Kerwin (2016) also reaffirmed the importance of the supervisor in that the students' experience is directly influenced by the supervisor. Another component of supervisor support involves feedback for the intern, whether it is task-based, or career-related. This supports Narayanan et al.'s (2010) findings that feedback was a crucial part of the internship, even if only for brief periods from a mentor within the organization. The interns have lower confidence levels in their work abilities entering the internship, and feedback from the supervisor can provide reassurance that they are completing tasks correctly, or helping them fix any mistakes. In turn, this builds confidence in the students' ability to complete tasks moving forward. As mentioned, the importance of the supervisor in the internship context is further shown by the tasks, or lack thereof, they entrust to interns.

**Tasks.** Interns enter internship experiences hoping to gain valuable work experience that can be carried forward. As stated, translatable work experience is becoming more necessary for employers when hiring for positions. This relates to Odio and Kerwin's (2016) findings that challenging work acted as a strong predictor for intern

satisfaction; again, employers want to see meaningful work experiences being completed by interns, and getting this valuable experience could be invaluable to interns. Therefore, valuable tasks must be given to the intern. Alternatively, as Burke and Carton (2013) found, giving interns menial tasks that serve no developmental purpose can cause intern dissatisfaction. As presented in the findings, this dissatisfaction was evident in the data around task expectations going unmet for some participants, and the interview data around periods of task inactivity. The importance relates to Hackman and Oldham's (1976) early literature on job design around job enrichment, and specifically what they termed as the Job Characteristics Model of Work Motivation. This model identified key characteristics that motivate employees, and the data from this study supports applicability to the internship context.

The key characteristics begin with meaningfulness, which includes three components that apply to interns, the first being task identity, which involves seeing a project completed from start to finish, and was seen as important to interns as well, especially for building confidence in themselves (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). The second component of meaningfulness is skill variety, which involves challenging tasks that require different skills to complete (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). This was valuable to interns as challenging work also allowed them to build confidence in their abilities, and assured them they could handle difficult tasks in the future. The third component of the meaningfulness characteristic was task significance, and was impactful for interns as it involved the degree to which their work impacted others, either within, or external to, the organization (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). This is relevant in terms of interns wanting to contribute and have an impact on the organization, and leave a memorable impression.

The last two characteristics of Hackman and Oldham's (1976) Model that apply to the internship context and were meaningful to interns were autonomy, or control over tasks given, and the ability to carry them out how they saw fit, as well as knowledge or feedback around results. Autonomy was important through the confidence it also built, and the value the intern gained from being responsible, for example, for organizing and running an event on their own. As well, the resulting feedback from supervisors ties in with the importance discussed by participants regarding the need for recognition of their work, which may highlight the theme around using an internship to build confidence.

One other scholar who cited Hackman and Oldham (1976) that applies to this task discussion is Parker (1998) who looked at the importance of individuals' self-efficacy, or belief that they can handle tasks. This applies to interns as seen with the impact of certain task-related stimulus events, which proved their capability in the workplace, and helps explain the value of challenging tasks to building confidence. Parker (1998) presented the concept of Role Breadth Self-Efficacy (RBSE) which is an extension of self-efficacy, and finds that in essence, it represents the degree to which employees believed they could handle more tasks or broader responsibility within their organization. For interns, in the short-term (current internship), completing tasks assured them that they could handle more tasks during that internship, but long-term, instilled the belief that they could handle more difficult work moving forward with their career, and succeed. The importance and discussion of tasks given during the internship are an aspect of the multi-group relationship fostered by the internship.

***Symbiotic relationship.*** Odio et al. (2014) discussed the symbiotic relationship created within the internship, and its ability to provide value to three groups: the intern,

the organization, and the educational institution. While this study did not look at the university's contribution to this relationship, the roles of the organization's members and intern were apparent in this study. This begins with, and ties into, the previous discussion around the important role of the supervisor in this relationship. It was evident how different the experiences were between participants that had supervisors who worked with them, versus those that ignored or did not commit to the intern's development, in terms of the benefits received by both parties. As Walo (2001) stated, interns are typically keen, motivated students that want to contribute; the stimulus events in some cases supported this by illustrating just how much these students can contribute. Also exhibited was the value of fresh perspectives and ideas that these interns can provide to the organizations, as mentioned by Donina, (2015) as well as Smith et al. (2015). However, they cannot contribute if not given the opportunity to do so.

With the survey data indicating certain intern expectations going unmet, this highlighted the importance of both parties (intern and organization supervisor) understanding each other's expectations entering the internship, as supported by Yiu and Law (2012). Yiu and Law (2012) argued that this two-way relationship is crucial in order to meet the goals and needs of both parties. Odio and Kerwin (2016) reaffirmed this by also stating that the "one-size-fits-all" internship format does not work, and that communication plays a crucial role. Further, this communication aspect was stressed by Friedman and Roodin (2013) stating that the intern in particular needs to have a voice and communicate, particularly if issues arise.

Unfortunately, the datasets indicated that students do not have a voice within the experience at times, or are not comfortable speaking up if things are not going well.

Regardless, the data allowed for a clearer understanding of the importance of a strong symbiotic relationship, and when the opposite occurs, the events that result. The next topic discussed focuses on the inclusion of the intern in different forms, particularly from the social side of the intern's experience.

**Inclusion and socializing.** The interactions and social components of the internship exceeded expectations and played a more prevalent role in how well the internship experience went for students, further adding to the complexity of the context. Coknaz (2014) initially found that when interns felt more like an employee and had positive social interactions, the students typically viewed the sport industry more desirably. Alternatively, Coknaz (2014) found other interns had issues with relationships within their internship, but it was understandable as students have different experiences in different contexts, based also on differing organizational cultures; the point being it was situational. While the focus was on employees, Saks and Gruman's (2011) research on the socialization of newcomers within an organization and the importance of social support helps at least partially explain this internship component. The authors noted the support from the supervisor and employees can help limit stress and/or anxiety, with meeting organization work standards, and act as "important sources of self-efficacy enhancing information" (Saks and Gruman, 2011, p. 21). Despite the shorter duration for interns, the events where some of these social interactions occurred had the ability to facilitate a voice as well as more opportunities during the experience, and enhance the value of the internship.

Inclusion, and how it materialized, led to positive outcomes during these experiences. Though not delving into the details of how this occurs, Coknaz (2014) also

found that feelings of being an employee, or on equal ground with employees, relatively speaking, led to intern satisfaction. This relates partially to tasks given to the participants in the present study, and highlights areas of inclusion, or lack thereof. This is important as Coknaz (2014) also noted that feeling unappreciated impacts not just the experience, but the students' views on that organization, and therefore career intentions.

Nevertheless, the value of social inclusion and interactions has become more evident, and can also foster more networking opportunities, something of great importance to sport management interns (or any interns, for that matter), as stressed by Kornspan and Duve (2013). Finally, it also was found to have a connection with well-being, as was discussed previously in this chapter.

In summary, while the adjusted Unfolding Model is applicable to the internship experience, the complexity of this context was evident, and therefore some adjustments to the model are necessary (see Figure 4). Further, well-being of interns has shown to be a relevant and important consideration when studying these experiences in this context. The concluding chapter reviews the limitations of this study, as well as the key implications for sport management educators, and the supervisors of interns. Finally, some important recommendations for future research are presented.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This study was designed to, and succeeded in, understanding the nature of stimulus events experienced by interns within the context of a notable sport management program's fourth year internship component. Further, the purpose included determining how these events, large or small, influenced intern career decision making, and well-being as a result. In this case, the stimulus events were predominately positively rated or were viewed as beneficial to interns. These events occurred in all stages and areas of the internship experience, ranging from: supervisory and peer interactions, networking opportunities, intern support received, feedback, challenging and meaningful tasks entrusted to the intern, to level of inclusion in meetings or out of office activities, and the voice the intern has within the organization. These events were described as more influential if related to areas that fell short of, or exceeded expectations, depending on what expectations the interns held, or their specific desired benefits. This reaffirms the importance of the symbiotic relationship nature of this experience as noted by Odio et al. (2014), and further detailed the importance of the supervisor in this relationship, and their commitment level to the intern's development. This contribution came from identifying events where the supervisor throughout the internship experience can most influence the career intentions and well-being outcomes of the intern, and intern perspectives on how these events specifically affect them.

The proposed Unfolding Model (Lee & Mitchell, 1994), with some minor adjustments (see Figure 4), proved to be applicable and useful for understanding how general occurrences within the internship shape the experience and outcome for interns. Career intentions was influenced in different ways, at times narrowing potential career

paths for interns (eliminating interests), introducing interns to new potential jobs, and in particular, helping instill confidence in their belief in their ability to succeed. As a result, the frequent career intentions determination was career uncertainty (specific role uncertainty), but a solidified desire to enter the sport industry, and assurance that sport was the industry for them. Further, the Met Expectations Model (Porter & Steers, 1973) is more important to the internship context than anticipated as the differing expectations of the interns contributed to how influential the stimulus events were that occurred. Further, expectations may moderate just how impactful some stimuli are, and reinforce the importance of understanding what interns anticipate from their experience.

Finally, well-being of interns is deemed to be an important factor to consider within the internship context. Similar to career intentions, stimulus events impacted well-being in different ways, whether it be from personal development (i.e., confidence), feeling of self-worth (i.e., lack of inclusion), peer relations, or aspects related to tasks completed (i.e., results seen, effort recognition, pride in their work, and the value it provides). The impact on well-being typically was a result of the shift in career intentions, meaning if career intentions were influenced positively, well-being increased, and vice versa; in other words, a positive relationship. As discussed, additional findings indicate the impact on well-being can influence an impact on career intentions, well-being can also be impacted on its own, and finally, it can be impacted simultaneously but separate from career intentions. These findings overall add further evidence to the complexity of the internship experience as a whole, and the influence these experiences can have on students. Therefore, it is important to ensure the experience is designed and delivered properly so all parties can benefit. Next, the limitations of this study, implications for



educators and organizations, as well as recommendations for future research are discussed.

### **Limitations**

As any study, this thesis has limitations that need to be discussed. First, it could be argued that limiting this study to one program limits the generalizability of the study. However, generalizability was not the goal of this study, but rather the goal was to provide a method and findings that may be transferred to other contexts. Brock's sport management program is ranked the fourth best undergraduate course provider, and served as the preferred group of students to be studied with it being so established (Evans, 2015). This was beneficial as being so established creates a better reputation, and therefore interns had more connections and internship options; this was seen with the range of organizations interns worked at, and the positions held. Due to the range of internship locations, a more comprehensive understanding was gathered on the sport management internship environment, as well as the influence of the events that can occur, and the resulting impacts had.

A second limitation, though anticipated, involved well-being as an outcome. While the tool used (MHC-SF) to study well-being had previously been deemed reliable and valid (Lamers et al., 2011), the literature had acknowledged well-being as difficult to measure and define – there are numerous approaches to studying it (Dodge et al., 2012). Well-being proved in this study to be difficult to measure and convey to participants, and while fortunately the design of this study allowed for a more in-depth understanding of participant well-being, particularly via interviews, there were difficulties at times, and a more refined as well as accepted approach to well-being would be of value.

One final limitation involved the understanding of student expectations. While the survey data proved valuable in terms of understanding expectation levels pre-internship, and for identifying where stimulus events may have occurred, there was no in-depth qualitative data being collected pre-internship on the students' expectations. This limits the understanding, post-internship, of the students' expectations in order to compare them to the post-internship views and how significant the changes may have been. While students were asked during the interview if expectations were met or unmet, with interviews being conducted post-internship, recollections of their true expectations may have differed.

### **Implications for Sport Management Educators**

This study's findings have a number of implications for sport management educators. First, and as has been stressed by previous scholars in different forms (Day, 2012; Todd et al., 2014), intern expectations need to be properly addressed in terms of ensuring realistic, attainable goals are set. Considering this issue is repeated frequently in the literature, not enough has been done. Part of this may arise from the way internships are portrayed in the media, and therefore how some interns base their expectations. Fortunately, the experiences in this study were more positive than what students anticipated, in most cases. Regardless, managing these expectations is important for institutions delivering internship programs. Though internship experiences are different from student to student, more realistic expectations can be provided to students and greater preparation can be provided for dealing with specific situations, such as where issues more frequently occur. One area to highlight would be preparing interns for downtime, especially at the beginning of the internship. This could involve

recommending ways to stay involved or learn, despite a lack of tasks. Additionally, as discussed previously, networking is important for interns in that there is a lot of pressure on these students to gain contacts within the experience. It is important to continue to highlight the value of networking, but temper student expectations and make them aware that opportunities could be limited depending on the organization. Alternatively, it would be beneficial to communicate with organization supervisors some key expectations the students have in order to ensure both parties have an understanding; in the case of networking, it may allow for opportunities to be facilitated more easily. Furthermore, the theme around intern optimism during negative occurrences should receive future attention in terms of understanding this potential mechanism. In terms of implications, it brings attention to whether or not this is acceptable from a sport management program point of view, as pressure may be systematically placed on students to accept negative occurrences as a part of entering the industry, or “paying one’s dues.”

In terms of the theory, this study produced a more in-depth understanding of where the most notable events are occurring within internships, and provides an updated version of the Unfolding Model to understand these experiences, as well as the resulting impact on career intentions and well-being. Further, this study provides a foundation to further study well-being within the internship context, as it had not yet been considered. Additionally, this raises awareness towards the importance of social factors within the internship, both to career intentions and well-being, and more specifically how social-related events can shape the experience of interns for better or for worse.

Based on the frequency of stimulus events involving limited tasks, particularly at the beginning of internships, interns should be warned that downtime will likely occur.

Moreover, educators or intern coordinators should prep interns for this to limit the impact it may have on how they view the experience, and consider ways to utilize this downtime instead of having them left to sit around with nothing to do.

Lastly, considering the amount of career uncertainty amongst interns as found by Odio et al. (2014), and with participants in this study, the usefulness of sandwich placements in earlier years may be an important investment for students. The fourth-year internship seems to help narrow down career options, but is still leaving graduates with a lot of uncertainty entering the job market. An additional earlier placement experience, even significantly shorter in duration, could assist with this.

### **Implications for Intern Supervisors in Sport**

Related to the intern expectations discussion, and to reiterate Odio and Kerwin's (2016) point, the supervisor needs to understand what type of work would challenge and provide value to the intern. Further, there seems to be some breakdowns in terms of what some supervisors hint may occur during, or after the internship (potential job, or networking opportunities, for example), and what actually occurs. This is where some of the negative stimulus events were most frequently seen. Therefore, it is important to limit any unmet promises, and again, take advantage of the nature of the internship in allowing all parties to benefit from the experience. If the supervisor is committed to the intern, the intern will provide value to the supervisor and organization; these students are eager to learn and contribute.

As related to Fisher's (1985) study on new employees, social support, and unmet expectations stress, introducing and immersing the intern into the social environment of the organization can result in many benefits, and give the intern more confidence to be

involved with the organization. It is important to stress that not including the intern, especially if it is an aspect of the experience they were anticipating, can be a detriment to the experience.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

A number of recommendations for future research have resulted from different aspects of this study. First and foremost, well-being has shown to be impacted by events that influence career intentions, and on its own within the internship context. Therefore, despite the differing approaches to studying well-being, further research should be done, particularly around developing a more understandable measure for the internship context. This would in turn ensure student intern interpretations of the concept are the same, and better conclusions can be made. This may be particularly relevant in other sport management programs where diverse student populations (e.g., sex or socio-economic status) are seeking internship experiences, as this sample was homogenous in nature (e.g., similar race, socio-economic status).

Second, as was a limitation of this study, an understanding of intern expectations was limited to the pre-survey data and post-internship participant recollection. With expectations having some influence on the degree to which certain stimulus events impact interns, it would be valuable to get detailed data on what interns expect before experiencing any aspect of the internship (i.e., prior to the first day of internship). At this point, the intern will have some details from their supervisor about their position, and therefore will have set some expectations. Further, enquiring about expectations around receiving a job at the completion of the experience would be valuable, as it seems to be a common occurrence and unmet aspect of the internship.

Regarding the Unfolding Model, used first by Odio et al. (2014), and now with some additional updates resulting from this study, it could be applied to different internship fields and industries. This could provide interesting findings on stimulus events occurring and if certain events are unique to sport, or shared across industries. Further, this proposed model, and the data collection methods used, were not tailored specifically to sport beyond item and question wording. Therefore, this would easily be transferable to another industry with minimal effort.

Interestingly, Fisher's (1985) social support research could prove to be equally, or more relevant, to sport management interns than employees. Considering the impact on career intentions and well-being of the social-categorized stimulus events, both positively and negatively, the socialization and inclusion of interns warrants further study. Based on Fisher's (1985) research, future studies could identify how social relations and inclusion could be used to potentially avoid entirely negative experiences.

The findings of this study contributed an initial understanding of the influence of stimulus events within the internship context, and the resulting impact on important outcomes (i.e., career intentions and well-being), within one sport management program. As noted, the methods and findings should be transferred to other internship contexts and fields to identify further theoretical development around similar or unique themes associated with the Met Expectations Model, stimulus events, and related outcomes via the updated Unfolding Model's pathways.

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## Appendix A

[Participant Code]

**4<sup>th</sup> year Sport Management Intern Measure  
Internship, Well-Being, & Career Intentions****[Pre-Internship Measure]**

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research regarding your internship experience, well-being, and your career intentions in the sport industry. This survey has three sections and should take no longer than 15-20 minutes to complete. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask or contact Cole McClean (cm10hu@brocku.ca).

**Demographic Information**

1. Please identify your sex...      ☐ Male      ☐ Female
2. Please indicate your age: \_\_\_\_\_ (☐ would rather not say)
3. Please indicate the name of the organization you will be interning for:
  - a. Have you ever volunteered, interned, or worked for this organization before?
    - i. If so, what were your responsibilities?
  - b. Do you know anyone, or did you know anyone with this organization previously?  
(Circle Yes or No)  
☐ Yes    ☐ No      (If **no**, skip to question 4)
    - i. If **Yes**: Are they still with the organization? (Circle response): ☐ Yes    ☐ No
    - ii. Will you be working or interacting with this individual you knew previously during your internship?      ☐ Yes    ☐ No
4. Have you ever interned for a sport organization before?      ☐ Yes    ☐ No  
(If not, please move on to Question 5)
  - a. If yes, which sport organization(s) (please list any you interned for)?
  - b. If yes, what general responsibilities did you have?
5. Please indicate your city/town of residence: \_\_\_\_\_
6. How long will your commute be (on average) to your internship organization (approximately in hours or minutes)? \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 1 (Expectations)**

Please respond to each of the following questions by indicating your expectation levels with each statement by circling a number from 1 (Very Low Expectations – I don't expect this to happen) to 7 (Very High Expectations – I do expect this to happen).

Please consider your expectations you have entering the internship when responding to each question.

Expectations:								
	Very low expectations					Very high expectations		
1.	I will develop current skills over the course of the internship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	I will feel valued as an intern	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	I will not be designated pointless tasks as my main job (photocopying, coffee run...etc)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	My supervisor/staff will welcome/accept me as an important member of their team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	I will gain important contacts that will benefit me moving forward with my career in the field of sport	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	I will be given tasks considered important to the organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	My supervisor (sport organization) will be working closely with me throughout the duration of the internship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	I will have a voice while interning and others will listen/consider my ideas or any recommendations I have	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	This internship will be an important step moving forward with my career	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	My supervisor will be committed to my development and want to work with me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	I will be given challenging tasks to complete	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	I will gain new relevant skills that will be important for moving forward with my career in sport	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	I expect to gain more confidence in my ability to succeed in the sport industry going forward	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	My supervisor will be open to any concerns or questions I have	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Section 2 – Career Intentions

At this time, I would like to know more about you and your intent to continue with a career in the sport industry. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling a number for each statement on the **7-point scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree)**.

?

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1. I plan on entering the sport industry once I have completed school	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I am excited to begin/continue a career in the sport industry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I believe a career in the sport industry will be satisfying (enjoyable)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I believe a career in the sport industry will be rewarding (work that I think is valuable/important)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. In the future I could see myself working for the organization I'm interning for	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I have a high sense of commitment towards the sport industry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I have a general idea of where in the industry I'd like to work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I'm nervous about entering the sport industry (unsure if it is for me)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please include any other information you would like regarding your expectations for your internship or your career intentions that you feel may be related to the survey items.

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## Section 3 – Well-Being (See Appendix C)

At this time, I will ask you to fill out a measure of well-being titled the Mental Health Continuum. The measurement uses a **6-point scale** and the items are based on how you have felt over the past **month**.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

If you would like a copy of the final report for this project, please email [cm10hu@brocku.ca](mailto:cm10hu@brocku.ca)

Appendix B

[Participant Code]

**4<sup>th</sup> year Sport Management Intern Measure  
Internship, Well-Being, & Career Intentions  
[Post-Internship Measure]**

Thank you for your continued participation in this research regarding your internship experience, well-being, and career intentions in the sport industry. This survey, similar to the first you completed, has three sections, and should take no longer than 15-20 minutes to complete. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask or contact Cole McClean (cm10hu@brocku.ca).

**Internship Information**

1. What were your role and responsibilities during the internship?

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**Section 1 (Experience)**

Please respond to each of the following questions by indicating your agreement with the description of your internship experience by circling a number from 1 (Strongly Disagree—didn't happen) to 7 (Strongly Agree—did happen).

Please consider the expectations you had entering the internship when responding to each question.

<b>Experiences:</b>							
	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>						<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1. I developed previous skills over the course of the internship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I felt valued as an intern	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I was designated pointless tasks as my main job (photocopying, coffee run...etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. The supervisor/staff welcomed/accepted me as an important member of their team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I gained important contacts that will benefit me moving forward with my career in the field of sport	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I was given tasks considered important to the organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. My supervisor (sport organization) worked closely with me throughout the duration of the internship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I had a voice while interning and others listened/considered my ideas or any recommendations I had	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. This internship was an important step moving forward with my career	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. My supervisor was committed to my development and wanted to work with me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. I was given challenging tasks to complete	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I gained new relevant skills that will be important for moving forward with my career in sport	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. I gained more confidence in my ability to succeed in the sport industry going forward	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. My supervisor was open to any concerns or questions I had	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



## Section 2 – Career Intentions

At this time, I would like to know your intent to continue with a career in the sport industry. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling a number for each statement on the **7-point scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree)**.

1.	I plan on entering the sport industry once I have completed school	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	I am excited to begin/continue a career in the sport industry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	I believe a career in the sport industry will be satisfying (enjoyable)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	I believe a career in the sport industry will be rewarding (work that I think is valuable/important)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	In the future I could see myself working for the organization I'm interning for	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	I have a high sense of commitment towards the sport industry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	I have a general idea of where in the industry I'd like to work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	I'm nervous about entering the sport industry (unsure if it is for me)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please include any other information you would like regarding your internship or your career intentions that you feel may be related to the survey items.

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## Section 3 – Well-Being (See Appendix C)

At this time, I would like to know more about you and your intent to continue with a career in the sport industry. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling a number for each statement on the **7-point scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree)**.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

If you would like a copy of the final report for this project, please email [cm10hu@gmail.com](mailto:cm10hu@gmail.com)

# Appendix C

## Mental Health Continuum – Short Form (MHC-SF)

During the past month, how often did you feel...	NEVER	ONCE OR TWICE	ABOUT ONCE A WEEK	ABOUT 2 OR 3 TIMES A WEEK	ALMOST EVERY DAY	EVERY DAY
1. Happy						
2. Interested in life						
3. Satisfied with life						
4. That you had something important to contribute to society						
5. That you belonged to a community (like a social group, or your neighborhood)						
6. That our society is becoming a better place for people like you						
7. That people are basically good						
8. That the way our society works makes sense to you						
9. That you liked most parts of your personality						
10. Good at managing the responsibilities of your daily life						
11. That you had warm and trusting relationships with others						
12. That you had experiences that challenged you to grow and become a better person						
13. Confident to think and express your own ideas and opinions						
14. That your life has a sense of direction or meaning to it						

## Appendix D

**INTERVIEW GUIDE – Interns****Preamble:**

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today.

My name is Cole McClean and I would like to talk to you about your internship experience. Specifically, we are assessing internship experiences in regard to significant positive and negative events or occurrences, in order to capture the effect of internship experiences on students and future career decisions. As for this interview, it should take approximately an hour. I will be audio-taping the session because I don't want to miss any of your comments. Although I will be taking some notes during the session, I can't possibly write fast enough to get it all down. Because we're on tape, please be sure to speak up so that we don't miss your comments. I want to ensure you are aware that a risk of participation is your identity being recognized based on what is discussed. Due to this all responses will be kept confidential. This means that your interview responses will only be shared with my research supervisor and we will ensure that any information we include in our report does not identify you as the respondent, nor your internship organization. While any anecdotes, quotes, or references you make will be anonymized, there is still a small possibility you are identified. Having noted this, please remember, you don't have to talk about anything you don't want to and you may end the interview at any time. Lastly, should you discuss any illegal distressing events or occurrences, I am obligated to report this to my faculty supervisor and the proper authorities. Anything else you report that is distressing, I can inform the internship coordinator and my faculty supervisor, should you consent to it.

Are there any questions about what I have just explained?

Are you willing to participate in this interview?

_____ Interviewee	_____ Witness	_____ Date
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Do you consent to any distressing events or occurrences you report or discuss in this interview, being brought to the attention of the internship coordinator and my faculty supervisor?

*Please circle one:*      **YES**                      **NO**

IF YOU FEEL ANY DISCOMFORT DURING OR AFTER THE INTERVIEW, PLEASE  
CONNECT WITH STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES ON CAMPUS AT 905-688-5550  
X3243

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*Please consider these questions with respect to your internship role for which you just completed.*

**Background Questions:**

1. Which organization do you complete your internship with?
  - a. Were you working within a specific department?
2. Was this internship your first choice? If not, was this organization appealing to you during your internship placement application process or was it a “last resort”? If a “last resort”, please explain why.
3. To confirm, on the survey you filled out you mentioned you **HAD/HAD NOT** interned or worked with this organization before, this is true?
  - a. If so, how long were you with them and what did your position consist of?
4. While interning in your most recent placement, what position did you fill within the organization (i.e., what were your responsibilities in general?)

**Internship/experience:**

1. How would you consider your internship went? How did it compare to what you expected going in? (**answer to this question determines focus of following questions**)
2. What were your main expectations going in? In brief, what did you picture resulting? Contacts? Potential job? Rewarding work?
  - a. Why did you expect that? (told it would happen? Assumption?)
  - b. **Follow-up:** Within your pre-post survey responses, you had a statistical **INCREASE/DECREASE** from expectations to experience, would you agree with this statistical result? Why/why not?
3. You say it went **Well/Not so well**, can you provide any situations or examples that made you feel this way about the internship?
  - a. **Follow-up** (If participant gives general aspect of experience; i.e., supervisor): can you think of a specific example from your experience related to [INSERT ASPECT]?
  - b. **If NO:** if no examples come to mind, was the experience as a whole just consistently **SATISFYING/NOT SATISFYING**?
  - c. Were there any events that occurred outside of your internship that may have had an impact on how the experience went? Anything that influenced your actions or mindset while you were there?
  - d. Extra probe to include increases/decreases on survey items (SEE SURVEY)

4. Based on your survey you indicated that your intention to enter the sport industry was [DURING INTERVIEW INSERT RESULT FROM SURVEYS] How has this changed after the completion of your internship? In what ways?
  - a. What is the reasoning for these changes, do you think?
5. **\*\*Rating Scale Question\*\*** You've talked about (x,y, and z in #3) and standing out, now were going to go through those (3) events on a rating scale, and talk about if it impacted (positive/negative) your career intentions regarding the sport industry?
  - a. Based on your event ratings, can you please explain why you have labelled it as such?
6. Were these events/occurrences/situations something you expected or anticipated prior to the internship? Explain.
7. Did the event(s) immediately change your outlook, or was it a slower change?
8. What aspects of the internship most influenced your change in perspective? **(if participant unsure, examples are: supervisor, location, job duties, acceptance by other employees)**
9. Did any of these events change your self-confidence (a) in general? (b) To be successful in the sport industry? (c) Impact you any way other than professionally (well-being)?
  - a. Based on your survey you indicated that your Well-Being [DURING INTERVIEW INSERT RESULT FROM SURVEYS], do you agree with this rating? *What would you attribute to that?*
  - b. Ok, were going to go through each event discussed again on the scale, in relation to well-being. Some examples to think about if well-being was affected (happiness; good at managing the responsibilities of your daily life; your life has a sense of direction or meaning to it)
10. Based on what has been discussed, would you intern with this organization again? Would you intern, in general, again?
11. At this moment, do you plan on remaining in the sport industry as a career?
  - a. If yes, do you think the internship solidified your desire to remain?
  - b. If no, do you think the internship turned you away from the sport industry?

**12.** Is there anything else related to what we have discussed that you would like to briefly mention?

**Conclusion**

I would like to thank you again for your participation in this study and taking time out of your schedule. As a reminder, your identity will remain confidential and any names will be replaced by pseudonyms. Only myself will have access to the list revealing who each pseudonym belongs to, and this will be encrypted and stored on a password-protected computer.

Do you have any questions?

Do you consent to any distressing events or occurrences you report or discuss in this interview, being brought to the attention of the internship coordinator and my faculty supervisor?

*Please circle one:*      **YES**                      **NO**

## Appendix E

### Letter of Invitation

**Date:**

**Title of Study:** Exploring the Impact of Stimulus Events on Intern Career Intentions and Well-Being

**Principal Investigator:** Cole McClean, MA Candidate, Department of Sport Management, Brock University

**Faculty Supervisor:** Dr. Shannon Kerwin, Assistant Professor, Department of Sport Management, Brock University

I, Cole McClean, from the Department of Sport Management, Brock University, invite you to participate in a research project entitled Exploring the Impact of Stimulus Events on Intern Career Intentions and Well-Being.

The purpose of this research project is to examine the nature of stimulus events within student internship experiences in sport management and the influence of stimulus events on future career decisions and well-being. A stimulus event is an event or occurrence, perceived as positive or negative, that occurs within the internship, or outside of it, and has an impact on student career intentions moving forward. Should you choose to participate, you will be asked to fill out an online internship expectations survey before your internship, and an online outcomes based survey after interning. If you choose to participate, you will also be given a \$20 gift card to the location of your choosing (please see page 2 for a list of your gift card options). If you choose to participate, your gift card can be retrieved by contacting [cm10hu@brocku.ca](mailto:cm10hu@brocku.ca). These two surveys will each take approximately 20 minutes of your time to complete. At the completion of your internship you may be invited for a one-on-one interview which will take approximately one hour of your time to complete. The total duration of participation would be about five months total as this study and your participation would be from approximately two weeks prior to your internship, and finish within two-three weeks after the completion of your internship. To clarify, after completing the pre-internship survey you are not required to participate again until after your internship is complete.

This research should benefit the sport management program as a whole as it seeks to identify positive and negative experiences, thereby potentially leading to changes to the internship course for future students.

This is a single site research study and has no affiliation or sponsoring companies outside of the university.

Should you be interested in participating in this study please send an email to Cole McClean ([cm10hu@brocku.ca](mailto:cm10hu@brocku.ca)), indicating your interest. I will contact you shortly after and send a secured online link with the required information for you to participate, including a consent form and the first survey itself, both of which are accessed on SurveyMonkey. SurveyMonkey is a secure online survey collection site based out of the US. Please note that responses within the system are subject to American Homeland Security laws such as the Patriot Act.

Lastly, it is important to inform you participation in this study is completely voluntary, and that your decision to participation, not participate, or even drop out in the middle of the study will have absolutely no impact on your relationship with the researchers, the sport management department, your internship connections, nor Brock University as a whole, now, or in the future. Only my supervisor and myself will know who chooses to participate.

Thank you,  
Cole McClean

**Cole McClean**  
**MA Candidate**  
**905-724-0027**  
**[cm10hu@brocku.ca](mailto:cm10hu@brocku.ca)**

**Dr. Shannon Kerwin**  
**Assistant Professor, Supervisor**  
**905-688-5550 x6177**  
**SKerwin@brocku.ca**

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through Brock University's Research Ethics Board- **REB File #: 16-005 – KERWIN**

**Gift Card Options (select one of the following):**

- Sport Chek
- Pen Centre
- Tim Horton's
- Starbucks
- Swiss Chalet/Harvey's/Milestones/Montana's
- Brock Campus Bookstore



## Appendix F

### Informed Consent (Appeared on SurveyMonkey)

Project Title: Exploring the Impact of Stimulus Events on Intern Career Intentions and Well-Being

Principal Investigator (PI): Cole McClean, MA Candidate  
Department of Sport Management  
Brock University  
905-724-0027; cm10hu@brocku.ca

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Shannon Kerwin:  
Department of Sport Management  
(905) 688-5550 Ext. 6177; SKerwin@brocku.ca

#### INVITATION

You are invited to participate in a study that involves research. The purpose of this study is to examine the nature of stimulus events within student internship experiences in sport management and the influence of stimulus events on future career decisions. A stimulus event is an event or occurrence, perceived as positive or negative, that occurs within the internship, or outside of it, and has an impact on student career intentions moving forward.

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED

Should you choose to participate, you will first be asked to fill out an online (Survey Monkey) internship survey that will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. This survey will be completed (1) before your internship starts, and (2) upon completion of your internship. The survey before the internship involves slightly different wording than the survey completed after your internship, but are based on the same questions. Based on survey results, you may be invited to take part in a one-on-one interview based on your internship experience. The interview would take approximately an hour of your time. There is no specific criteria to be interviewed, rather, all participants will be invited to complete one should they be interested. Interview participation is completely voluntary, and you may decline to complete the interview at any time should you not be comfortable. The interview itself would take part locally (Brock University) if you are available to do so, in a to-be-determined location. The likely location would be a seminar room in the sport management department. The interviews will be audio recorded for transcription purposes. Total participation from pre survey to post survey to potential interview will occur in a five month timeframe as interviews would be completed ideally two weeks after you complete the internship.

#### POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS

Possible benefits of participation include potential improvements to the sport management program as a whole as the study seeks to identify positive and negative experiences, thereby potentially leading to changes to the internship course for future students. There also may be risks associated with participation such as yourself discussing any issues that arose during the internship, and in turn the possibility that the organization you interned with finding out. To prevent this from happening, neither your name, nor the organization's, would be used in order to maintain confidentiality. Further, nothing you indicate on your survey or state in an interview would be linked back to yourself, nor would the internship coordinator have access to this knowledge, therefore your participation will not affect your course grade. Regarding discussing potentially distressful occurrences (should they occur) during the internship, you may experience discomfort. In the case of this occurring, I will not force you to discuss such occurrences any further if they make you uncomfortable. Additionally, I will provide you with contact information for Student Health Services on campus. Lastly, you are not required to discuss anything you do not want to.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

As mentioned, no names will be revealed in this study, rather pseudonyms will be designed for individuals or organizations described. Further, the list of names and pseudonyms will be stored on an encrypted file, on a password-locked computer that only the student investigator have access to, to ensure confidentiality. Your student number will be requested on the surveys order to match pre and post surveys

for comparison and interview selection purposes by the student investigator. Once matched, these student numbers will be deleted and replaced by a random number to keep them matched. The faculty supervisor and internship coordinator will not have access to this list identifying the surveys.

Data collected during this study (online survey responses, digital audio files, and transcribed interview documents) will be stored on a password protected computer in an encrypted file. The hard copy consent forms that will be obtained prior to an interview will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the secured office of Cole McClean. Data will be kept for two years after which time all data collected will be destroyed. Additionally, data collected on SurveyMonkey is subject to American Homeland Security laws such as the Patriot Act.

Access to this data (minus personal identifiers) will be restricted to myself, Cole McClean, and my supervisor, Dr. Shannon Kerwin.

### **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

Participation in this study is voluntary, therefore, it is not an internship or sport management requirement. Your decision to participate, drop out during participation, or not participate at all, has no influence on any relationship with either investigators, Brock University, or any internship connections. Only the student investigator will know whether or not an individual participates. If you wish, you may decline to answer any questions or participate in any component of the study. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time and may do so without any penalty or loss of gift card compensation. To withdraw, please email Cole McClean ([cm10hu@brocku.ca](mailto:cm10hu@brocku.ca)) indicating your desire to drop out. Any data retrieved, particularly survey data, may be used for comparison purposes, but it will remain confidential. Interview data will be deleted immediately upon decision to drop out of the study.

### **PUBLICATION OF RESULTS**

Results of this study may be published in professional journals and presented at conferences. Feedback about this study will be available upon completion, approximately Fall 2017. You will be given an opportunity to see your interview transcription, and if you do not feel your responses are not conveyed accurately, you can let the investigator (Cole McClean) know and changes will be made to correct it. You will be given one week to review the results to determine if any errors were made. Should you fail to contact the investigator at this point it will be assumed there were no issues with the data. To receive feedback, contact Cole McClean using the information above. It is important to note that the internship coordinator, Emily Allan, will receive a copy of the final report however, names and organizations will be removed from the report of the findings (all data will be reported as aggregate and anonymous).

### **CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE**

If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact Cole McClean and Dr. Shannon Kerwin using the contact information provided above. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at Brock University (REB file # 16-005). If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office at 905-688-5550 ext. 4876, [reb@brocku.ca](mailto:reb@brocku.ca).

Thank you for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

### **CONSENT FORM**

I agree to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

If you consent to participate in the survey, click ☐ here: I agree to participate

If you consent to be contacted and involved in a follow-up interview, ☐ click here: I agree to participate in a follow interview

With consent to the follow-up interview, please include a preferred contact email address:

### Appendix G

P#\_\_\_\_\_

#### Stimulus Event Rating Scale

Think about this event in terms of the impact and importance it held when it happened. Was it Positive or Negative? If it was Positive, how Positive was it? If it was Negative how Negative was it? Use the Following Rating Scale to choose and impact rating for the event when it happened.

-10 -9 -8 -7 -6 -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4 +5 +6 +7 +8 +9  
+10

→Stimulus Event rated:

Outcome:

(Circle the Appropriate Number)

-if can't think of a specific event, how about that person on your entire internship experience (try to find specific event)

>want them to rate the event, not the person

#### Stimulus Event Rating Scale

-10 -9 -8 -7 -6 -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4 +5 +6 +7 +8 +9  
+10

→Stimulus Event rated:

Outcome:

#### Stimulus Event Rating Scale

-10 -9 -8 -7 -6 -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4 +5 +6 +7 +8 +9  
+10

→Stimulus Event rated:

Outcome:

#### Stimulus Event Rating Scale

-10 -9 -8 -7 -6 -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4 +5 +6 +7 +8 +9  
+10

→Stimulus Event rated:

Outcome: